

Iraq frees more Arab prisoners

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq freed a group of Arab prisoners on Monday following an amnesty declared last month by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) said. "We have been informed that a group of Arab prisoners was freed today from Abu Ghariy Prison [near Baghdad]," said ICRC spokesman Frank Bertelsbeck, without specifying the number. The group included two Lebanese nationals. More than 300 Arab prisoners, mostly from Egypt, have been freed since President Hussein announced the amnesty on Feb. 5 after a meeting with Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid. The ICRC has said it expects a total of between 1,200 and 1,300 Arab prisoners to be released, while the Iraqi authorities have said the pardon did not cover prisoners convicted of spying.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تيمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الراية

Volume 23 Number 6783

AMMAN TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 1998, DHUL QADEH 12, 1418

Price: Jordan 200 fils

Four Islamists, policeman killed in Egypt

MINYA (AFP) — Four Islamists branded "dangerous" and a policeman were killed in a shoot-out Monday in a village in Egypt's Minya province, police said. Another policeman was also injured in the first violent incident between armed Islamists and Egypt's security forces since December. Police said militants from the armed Egyptian group Jamaa Islamiya were surrounded by security forces in a village around 300 kilometres south of Cairo but refused to surrender and fired on the police. Security agents fired back, killing four of the Islamists. One police constable was found dead and another was injured during the gunfight.

Israeli student stabbed in Jerusalem

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — An Israeli Talmudical college student was seriously wounded by three men who stabbed him in central Jerusalem Sunday, state radio reported. The man, aged around 20, was in serious condition in hospital with a stab wound in his chest, the radio said. He had been unable to tell police if his assailants were Arabs or Jews.

Bosnian Serb pleads guilty to rape before U.N. court

THE HAGUE (AFP) — A Bosnian Serb, accused by the U.N. war crimes court of raping and torturing Muslim women during the Bosnian war, on Monday pleaded guilty to rape but not guilty to torture. The case against Dragoljub Kunarac marks the first time the war crimes court has treated sexual offences as a crime against humanity.

Turkish troops kill 40 rebel Kurds

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkish army troops have killed 40 separatist Kurdish rebels in the last three days in a major military campaign in the troubled southeast, the state-run Anatolian news agency reported Monday. The fighting between the troops and members of the outlawed Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) took place in a mountainous area in the province of Bingol, it said. It was the large-scale fighting in southeast Turkey since last autumn.

Blast kills 12 and injures 17 in Mogadishu — sources

MOGADISHU (AFP) — At least 12 people were killed and 17 others injured when a device exploded in north Mogadishu on Monday, witnesses and medical sources said. Six of the injured were in critical condition, a source at a north Mogadishu hospital said. Other reports said that two of the injured had already died in hospital. Karan district police commander Youssef Jilhay put the death toll lower than the witnesses and medical sources, saying only eight died. The incident occurred in the Argentine neighbourhood of north Mogadishu, controlled by warlord Ali Mahdi Mohammed. Mr. Ali Mahdi sent a message of condolences to the victims of the blast, believed to have been caused either by a land mine or grenade being detonated by fire that had been lit to burn garbage.

Prince Hassan: 1998 is year of Israeli redeployment in W. Bank

By Alia A. Toukan
Special to the Jordan Times

RAMALLAH — Jordan expects Israel to fully honour its commitments to the Palestinians, in particular its troop redeployments from "most Palestinian areas," His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan said following talks with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in Ramallah yesterday. "Let me reiterate that 1998 is the year of [Israeli] redeployment from most [Palestinian] areas," Crown Prince Hassan told reporters after his discussions with Mr. Arafat and other senior Palestinian officials.

During the talks Mr. Arafat told Crown Prince Hassan that he is seeking King Hussein's assistance, top Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said. "Mr. Arafat is hoping to use Jordan's close contacts with the Americans and the Israelis to push the stalled peace process forward," a senior Palestinian official said, requesting anonymity. "We listened to the Crown Prince's good advice... especially since we are facing some difficulties in the peace process... that we can hopefully overcome," Mr. Arafat told journalists, after thanking His Majesty King Hussein and



Palestinian President Yasser Arafat addresses a news conference next to HRH Crown Prince Hassan after their meeting on Monday. Both leaders called on Israel to implement its Middle East peace commitments (Reuters photo)

His Royal Highness for their efforts in support of the peace process. Dr. Erekat said that talks between the two sides focused on the stalled peace process and bilateral relations, particularly in the economic field. "Both sides believe that 'there is nothing wrong with the peace process, the negotiations, or with the Oslo' accords... What is wrong are the practices of the government of [Israeli

Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu," Dr. Erekat said. Crown Prince Hassan and Mr. Arafat called for a more concerted effort on behalf of the international community in pushing forward the peace process, deadlocked since the Hebron accords of January 1997. "We are going through an acute phase in the region... and expect a political initiative from the international community," the Crown

Prince said, stressing that the Arab World still has the "political will" to reach a comprehensive peace, despite the obstacles. Mr. Arafat echoed the sentiment, saying that agreements reached between the Palestinians and the Israelis were not bilateral, since they were also signed by Jordan, Egypt, the U.S., the EU,

(Continued on page 7)

Iraqi oil minister meets Annan to discuss oil-for-food accord

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The Iraqi foreign minister met here Monday with U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan in a bid to iron out problems holding up implementation of an enhanced oil-for-food deal. Although U.N. officials said that Minister Mohammad Said Al Sabhaf's visit would focus on the oil-for-food arrangement, he was also expected to discuss the issue of U.N. weapons inspections during his week-long visit to New York. Mr. Sabhaf made no comment to reporters Monday when he arrived at U.N. headquarters for the meeting with Mr. Annan. It is the U.N. chief's first meeting with a senior Iraqi official since his return from Baghdad, after signing a Feb. 23 agreement providing for unfettered access for the U.N. inspectors attempting to verify the elimination of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

The accord also provided for new guidelines for the inspection of so-called presidential sites, which Mr. Annan was due to release to the U.N. Security Council on Monday. The council endorsed the accord on March 2, but warned of "severe consequences" — military action — if Iraq fails to cooperate with the inspectors of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) in future. Washington reiterated Monday that in case of a new violation by Iraq, no further Security Council action would be necessary, after Mr. Annan told ABC Television Sunday that additional consultations should take place. A team searching for suspected concealed weaponry, led by former U.S. Marine Scott Ritter, has been conducting snap inspections in Iraq since last week without incident. Baghdad accuses Wash-

ington and London of using UNSCOM as tool to prolong U.N. sanctions that have been in force against Iraq since its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The crippling oil embargo cannot be lifted until UNSCOM has completed its work. The Security Council, expressing concern about the humanitarian effect of the sanctions, on Feb. 20 decided to raise the amount of oil Iraq is permitted to sell in the oil-for-food arrangement from \$2 billion every six months to \$5.2 billion. Two-thirds of the oil profits are set aside for badly-needed food and medicine, while 30 per cent covers compensation for the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The rest defrays the cost of U.N. weapons inspectors. But in a potential deal breaker, Iraq has objected to the sharp rise in

(Continued on page 7)

World powers agree on Belgrade weapons embargo over Kosovo

LONDON (AFP) — World powers at a meeting in London agreed Monday to seek a U.N. arms embargo against Yugoslavia over the bloody repression of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and to send a mediator to the province. Foreign ministers or deputy ministers from Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and the United States also agreed to ban the trade in equipment which could be used for internal repression. Former Spanish Premier Felipe Gonzalez will act as a mediator, the ministers said.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright pronounced herself "very satisfied" with the agreement. While supporting the first two measures, Russia agreed to sit out on other measures discussed at the emergency meeting of the six-nation Contact Group on the former Yugoslavia. Those included a threat to freeze Yugoslavia's foreign assets in 10 days if the situation in Kosovo does not improve, a ban on visas for Yugoslav officials and ministers and an end to foreign government aid. The group also agreed to seek to extend the mandate

of a U.N. force in neighbouring Macedonia, to urge the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia to investigate alleged war crimes in Kosovo, and to send in Organisation for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE) monitors. Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic must grant Kosovo "an enhanced status" within Yugoslavia, withdraw riot police from the province, allow access to the Red Cross and commit himself to dialogue with Kosovo Albanians

(Continued on page 7)

Ritter's team carries out marathon inspection

BAGHDAD (AFP) — A team of U.N. arms experts led by former U.S. Marine Scott Ritter returned Monday from a marathon inspection which lasted almost 24 hours, a U.N. official said. "They left yesterday at 9:00 a.m. and came back here at 5:00 a.m.," Alan Daocy, spokesman of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) in charge of disarming Iraq, said from the U.N. arms monitoring centre in Baghdad. "They inspected a number of sites, two of which were 'sensitive,'" he told AFP without giving locations. "Their mission was satisfactory... and they are resting today." Iraq's official news agency INA said Sunday that the UNSCOM team led by Mr. Ritter, who is dubbed a CIA spy in Baghdad, visited four sites on its third day of inspections. The inspections were conducted "without impediment and with full cooperation from the Iraqi side," as on previous days, it said. An Iraqi-U.N. accord on Feb. 23 headed off the threat of a U.S.-led air assault and laid down special arrangements for UNSCOM to enter eight presidential sites, which Baghdad had previously declared off-limits. Mr. Ritter is expected to stay in Iraq until the middle of this week. His mission, which started Thursday, does not cover presidential sites but it is seen as a test of Iraq's pledge to cooperate fully with UNSCOM. The American's last visit to Baghdad was cut short on Jan. 16 after Iraqi authorities barred him from inspecting "sensitive" military and intelligence sites on the grounds his team was dominated by Anglo-Saxons. Baghdad accuses Washington and London of using UNSCOM as tool to prolong the U.N. sanctions in force against Iraq since its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The embargo can not be lifted until UNSCOM has completed its work.

King asks Cabinet to speed up investigating Ma'an suspects

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Monday directed the government to speed up investigations with detainees who were held, suspected of being responsible for, or taking part in last month's disturbances in the southern town of Ma'an. One man was killed and over 20 injured in the clashes between demonstrators and police on Feb. 20 and 21 following pro-Iraq rallies. At least 44 people were interrogated for their alleged involvement in the demonstrations and clashes with the police, and the government has said that it will either release some of the detainees on the completion of the investigations or will refer them to

court for trial. Following the disturbances a one week curfew was imposed on Ma'an and the police carried out house to house searches during which they reportedly confiscated 500 illegal weapons and unspecified quantities of explosives. More than half the Lower House deputies last Wednesday urged the government to release all the people who were arrested in Ma'an, a town of 30,000 people. Representatives of 13 political parties, headed by the Islamic Action Front, called for the immediate release of all persons arrested in the disturbances and demanded the dismissal of the government, accusing it of being responsible for the unrest.

At the time of the disturbances the King defended the role of the security forces saying that "they exercised restraint" in the encounter with demonstrators and were the targets of a "campaign" by the opposition. An announcement made Monday said King Hussein directed Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali to speed up the investigations. Jordan News Agency, Petra, said "the Royal directives reflect the King's keenness to end the investigations with the release of those who committed minor violations and to refer the others to court for trial."

Jordan, Israel sign standards unification agreement

By Ghalia Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan and Israel on Monday signed a standards unification agreement which they hope would boost low trade levels since the signing of the peace treaty in 1994. The agreement, on "reciprocal accreditation of laboratory results," is expected to improve the "non-satisfactory" trade exchanges that failed to exceed \$35 million in 1997, officials said.



Hani Mulki, minister of trade, industry and Supply, watches Israeli Minister of Industry and Trade Natan Sharansky signing an agreement to expand economic ties between the two countries during a signing ceremony in Amman on Monday. Jordan and Israel agreed on Monday to forge ahead in expanding trade exchanges and joint ventures saying they will work to build on tapping their economies mutual advantages (Reuters photo)

Crown Prince urges Israel to lift trade restrictions with PNA

HIS ROYAL Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Monday stressed the importance of activating inter-trade between Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). At a meeting with the Israeli Minister of Industry and Trade Natan Sharansky yesterday, Prince Hassan urged Israel to "lift obstacles hindering trade" between Jordan and Israel, according to an official source. The source added that both sides also discussed means to facilitate trade between Jordan and the PNA. Also on Monday, His Majesty King Hussein met with Mr. Sharansky and discussed the implementation of trade agreements signed between the two countries under the peace treaty.

free access to U.S. markets without reciprocal benefits. Both Jordan and Israel, in the presence of U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, signed the QIZ agreement during the Middle East and North Africa conference held in Doha last November. Products manufactured at QIZ should involve an Israeli input of at least 11.7 per cent. Jordan and Israel also

agreed to form a joint committee that will licence Israeli-based businesses eligible for a duty free access on U.S. markets. "The QIZ is a unique, unprecedented agreement which gives a unique opportunity to enhance economic cooperation between both countries," Mr. Sharansky told reporters. He said in addition to the

(Continued on page 7)

King Fahd hospitalised

RIYADH (AFP) — King Fahd was admitted to hospital here Monday suffering from an inflammation of the gall bladder as the royal palace called for prayers for his recovery. The official news agency SPA, quoting a statement from the palace, said the monarch was taken to King Faisal Hospital in Riyadh suffering from inflammation of the gall bladder. "We call on God to look after the sovereign and to restore his health," the palace said. Such an inflammation could be caused by a simple infection, but it could also be linked to cancer of the pancreas,

medical sources said. They said it could have serious repercussions for a patient in his mid 70s like the king. Two weeks ago, the king, who is believed to have been born in 1921, was reported to be resting outside the capital. King Fahd was hospitalised in November 1995 after suffering a stroke and called on his half-brother, Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz, to run the affairs of state for six weeks. The monarch recovered and returned to his duties, although Prince Abdullah, 74, has increasingly played a more prominent role. King Fahd has been chairing the weekly cabinet meetings

and appeared in good health in recent encounters, although he used a wheelchair and a cane to stand up because of circulatory problems and diabetes, diplomats said. He met former Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani on Feb. 21, in his last official engagement. One of the 45 recorded sons of the founder of the largest Gulf Arab state, Abdul Aziz Ben Saud, King Fahd became the country's fifth king when King Khaled died in 1982. King Fahd has reigned for the last 16 years over a country which is the world's largest petroleum producer and exporter and holds a fourth of its oil reserves.

Hizbollah rejects security guarantees for Israel

BEIRUT (R) — The leader of the Hizbollah said in remarks published Monday that the Beirut government should not give Israel security guarantees in the event of Israel's withdrawal from south Lebanon.

"Can anyone give the enemy what it wants in terms of security after all the aggression it carried out against the people in the occupied zone?" asked Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah in comments carried in

Lebanese newspapers.

Israel said last week it had given up trying to make peace with Syria and was aiming instead to negotiate terms for an Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon.

Lebanon swiftly rejected any negotiations, calling the proposal "nothing new" and insisting, as did Syria, that U.N. Resolution 425 called for an unconditional Israeli pullout.

Israeli leaders have been

signalling a readiness to agree to withdraw from Lebanon as of late, but only so long as the Beirut government stops Hizbollah guerrilla attacks.

Hizbollah is fighting a guerrilla war of attrition to drive Israeli troops and their local militia allies, the South Lebanon Army (SLA), from the Jewish state's south Lebanon self-declared "security zone."

Israel has occupied parts of south Lebanon since 1978, saying it is necessary to protect its northern border area.

Thirty-nine Israeli soldiers and 54 guerrillas, mostly Hizbollah, were killed in Lebanon in 1997.

Sheikh Nasrallah said Israel had acknowledged U.N. Resolution 425 after so many years "as a result of blows by the Islamic resistance." He said an unconditional Israeli withdrawal was a matter of time.

Hizbollah guerrillas frequently clash with Israeli troops and the SLA in south

Lebanon, site of air raids, rocket attacks and roadside bombs.

Hizbollah Deputy Secretary General Sheikh Naeem Kassem said the group would not reveal its future plans in the event of an Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon.

"Israel has no right to know what might happen after its withdrawal because this would amount to giving it one of the guarantees it is asking for," he told Al Nahar newspaper.

Israel to recognise Pollard as spy — reports

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli government will soon recognise officially for the first time that a former U.S. navy analyst serving a life sentence for espionage was an Israeli spy, Israeli media reported Monday.

Israel public radio and the Yedioth Aharnot newspaper said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would announce later this week or next week that Jonathan Pollard was spying for Israel when he was arrested in 1985.

Mr. Netanyahu's aim is to facilitate efforts to convince the U.S. government to release Mr. Pollard, a Jewish American who has taken

Israeli nationality since his imprisonment, and let him emigrate to Israel.

Mr. Pollard has been seeking through Israel's supreme court for years to force the government to admit officially that he worked for the Mossad foreign intelligence service.

The Yedioth Aharnot said it had been informed that Mr. Netanyahu was finally willing to take this step by Yehi Edelstein, the minister for immigrant affairs who recently met with Mr. Pollard in his North Carolina jail cell.

There was no immediate confirmation of the change in policy from Mr. Edelstein's office or other officials.

Successive Israeli governments have discreetly sought to obtain Mr. Pollard's release, but have declined repeated demands by the spy for official recognition of his links to Mossad.

After coming to power in June 1996, Mr. Netanyahu appointed a ministerial committee headed by cabinet secretary Danny Navah to seek Pollard's release. The press reports said Mr. Navah would soon travel to the United States to meet with Mr. Pollard.

Mr. Netanyahu also reportedly instructed an official at Israel's embassy in Washington, Yitzhak Oren, to meet

weekly with Pollard to brief him on efforts to obtain his release.

Pollard was a U.S. Navy analyst when he was recruited by Mossad in the early 1980s to pass on classified intelligence information, notably concerning military developments in the Arab World.

He was arrested in 1985 and sentenced to life in prison for treason in 1987. He obtained Israeli nationality in 1996.

U.S. President Bill Clinton last year rejected a request to grant a pardon to Pollard, bowing to U.S. intelligence officials who said the spy's release would undermine U.S. security.

Top Turkish general to visit Russia

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey's top commander, General Ismail Hakkı Karadayi, will visit Russia next month, marking the first such high-ranking trip for a Turkish military officer since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian diplomatic sources said Monday.

The two sides during the visit are expected to discuss possible sales of Russian military equipment to Turkey and explore joint production of arms systems, the sources said.

The exact date of the trip, during which Gen. Karadayi would hold talks with top Russian military and defence officials, is expected to be decided on in the next couple of weeks, they told AFP.

Russian companies are already bidding for Turkey's multi-billion dollar programmes to jointly produce tanks and attack helicopters with foreign partners. Other contenders include U.S., European and Israeli firms.

Turkey was angered by a Russian decision last year to sell S-300 advanced surface-to-air missiles to Cyprus, internationally-recognised Greek-Cypriot government.

However, Turkish opposition to the deal has decreased in recent months. The Russian ambassador to Ankara, Vadim Kuznetsov, last month said that Moscow was willing to boost defence industry cooperation with Turkey.

"Apart from a very limited number of items that are not for sale to anyone, including nuclear weapons and long-range strategic missiles, we are ready to sell anything to Turkey. You just name the type," he said.

Although Ankara and Moscow are at odds over pipeline routes to transport oil and natural gas from former Soviet republics in Central Asia, the two countries have boosted trade since 1991.

Gen. Kuznetsov said the bilateral trade volume, including unregistered sales of Turkish goods to Russia, exceeded \$14 billion last year.



PROTEST TO FREE PALESTINIAN PRISONERS: Palestinian women chant during a protest Monday in front of the headquarters of the International Red Cross Committee in Gaza Strip. The women called on Israel to free their sons who are held as political prisoners in Israeli jails. More than 4,000 Palestinian prisoners are still held in Israeli jails (Reuters photo)

Top U.S. general says forces in Gulf must stay on alert against Iraq

RIYADH (AFP) — General Henry Shelton, the top officer in the U.S. military, met Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz here Monday and said his forces in the Gulf must stay on alert against Iraq.

"Until U.N. weapons inspectors are allowed to complete their work, we have no choice but to assume that Iraq has not abandoned its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and that it continues to pose a threat to its neighbours," he said.

"The United States and our coalition partners will remain vigilant," the chair-

man of the joint chiefs of staff said in a statement at the end of a two-day visit during which he also met Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz.

"We will continue to consult closely and to rely on the advice and friendship of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in our dealings in this region," said the general.

Gen. Shelton said his talks in Saudi Arabia, where he met top military officials, focused on "issues of mutual concern, particularly those related to the security and stability of the Gulf region."

A U.S. embassy spokes-

woman, meanwhile, said that Gen. Shelton on his first visit here as chairman of the joint chiefs of staff also visited American military units in the Riyadh region.

Gen. Shelton was to travel to Kuwait later the same day on the second leg of a tour that will also take him to Egypt.

The Pentagon has said the general's tour was long scheduled, but it comes as a huge U.S. force has been kept in the Gulf to await a test of Iraq's implementation of a U.N. accord on arms inspections.

Before the Feb. 23 accord,

which headed off the threat of U.S. military action, Saudi Arabia ruled out the use of its territory, where around 100 U.S. planes are based, to launch attacks on Iraq.

Under an operation named "Southern Watch," U.S. aircraft in Saudi Arabia help patrol a "no-fly" zone over southern Iraq.

In Kuwait, Gen. Shelton was to hold talks Tuesday with his Kuwaiti counterpart, Lieutenant General Ali Mohammed Hassan Al-Mu'min. He also plans to visit U.S. troops at Camp Doha and attend joint U.S.-Kuwaiti manoeuvres.

U.S. planned for government-in-exile during attack — Iraq

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq said Monday that a 30-member government-in-exile, financed by the CIA, was to have been announced during a U.S. attack in the crisis over U.N. arms inspections.

The Feb. 25 accord with the United Nations averted the threatened U.S. air war on Iraq.

"The government is made up of 30 members who receive their salaries from the U.S. intelligence services," the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) said in the official newspaper Naba Al Shaba.

The paper, run by President Saddam Hussein's son Uday, citing diplomatic sources, said

the international media, published a list of 15 names and said the formation of the government had been postponed because of the Iraq-U.N. accord.

Among the members, it said, were Ahmed Shalabi who held the London-based Iraqi National Congress (INC) opposition coalition and Wafiq Samarra, a former military intelligence chief who fled Iraq in 1994.

Mr. Shalabi said last week that the United States was plotting to overthrow Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and install a democratic government. Two senior U.S. officials had briefed him on the plan, the INC leader said.

Iranian warship makes visit to Saudi Arabia

TEHRAN (R) — An Iranian warship has docked in a Saudi Arabian port on a friendly visit for the first time since Iran's 1979 Islamist revolution, a newspaper said on Monday.

The Khark logistics warship, carrying members of Iran's Revolutionary Guards and students and professors from the Iranian navy, was met by Saudi military officials when it arrived in the Red Sea port of Jeddah on Saturday, the Tehran Times said.

The English-language daily said it was the first visit by an Iranian military ship to Saudi Arabia since the revolution. It

did not say how long the visit would last.

Former Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani on Friday completed a 15-day visit to Saudi Arabia, where he discussed sagging oil prices and regional cooperation with senior members of Saudi Arabia's ruling royal family.

Saudi officials have talked of a new chapter in relations.

The visit of the Iranian warship coincided with a visit to Saudi Arabia by U.S. Army General Henry Shelton, who met Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Abdullah.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

16:11 ...Cartoon ... C.R.G.
16:30 ...French programmes
18:00 ...Small Talk
18:30 ...Drama ... Border Town
19:00 ...The Journal
19:15 Educational Magazine ...
19:30 ...News ... Headlines
19:35 Comedy ... Prols and Pys
20:00 ...What Would You Do?
20:30 ...Encounter
21:10 ...Drama ... Aqaba Bay
22:00 ...News in English
22:30 Feature Film ... "Middle Ages"
23:59 ...Main Gate
00:30 ...End of T.V.

PRAYER TIMES

04:32 ...Fajr
05:49 ...Sunrise/Duha
11:46 ...Dhuhr
15:07 ...Asr
17:43 ...Maghreb
19:00 ...Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 5021740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.

4632745

St. Joseph Church Tel.

4625894

Terra Sancta Church Tel.

4622946

Anglican Church Tel.

4624553

St. Atram Syrian Orthodox

Church Tel. 771751

Amman International Church

Tel. 565907

German-speaking Evangelical

Congregation Tel. 565904

The Evangelical Local Church

in Amman Tel. 511295

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter

Day Saints Tel. 565902

St. John the Baptist at De la

Salle College Tel. 564175

Church of the Annunciation

Tel. 567229

Greek Orthodox Church Tel.

4623541

Church of Presentation, Sweifeh

Tel. 502175

The English-Language

Catholic Parish Tel. 464191

Evangelical Free Church Tel.

802479

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Temperatures are expected to

rise significantly. It will be warm

and sunny, clouds appearing at

different altitudes, winds south-

westerly moderate. In Aqaba,

skies will be northerly moderate,

and seas calm.

Amman 05/19

Aqaba 10/26

Deserts 14/20

Jordan Valley 11/25

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 15, Aqaba 24 H-mid-

day readings: Amman 37 per

cent, Aqaba 25 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Mukhlis Halaseh 5519220

Dr. Rudi Sukkar 856457

Dr. Fadi Al Khateib 665487

Dr. Ghazi Abu Shukhah 753405

Ferdows pharmacy 783356

Al Asema pharmacy 4637055

Al Salam pharmacy 4636730

Yacoub pharmacy 4644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 4637660

Nalroukh pharmacy 4636772

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 4637111

Civil Defence Department 5661111

Civil Defence Emergency 4630341

Rescue Police Tel. 4621111

Fire Brigade 4617101

Blood Bank 75121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 806390

Public Security Dept. 4620321

Hotel Complaints 5605804

Price Complaints 5661176

Water & Sewerage Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality Com-

plaints 787111

Telephone Information (directo-

ry assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone

Repairs 4623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 771111

Water Authority 5680100

J. Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Co. 4636381

RJ Flight Information 44-

53200

Queen Alia Int. Airport 44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

The Arab Centre for Heart and

Special Surgery 5921199

The Islamic Abdi 5661317

Hussein Medical Centre Tel.

836813

Luzaila 4630195

Khatid Maternity 46442816

Akileh Maternity 4624412

Jabal Amman Maternity

4642562

Malhas, J. Amman 4636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 5607071

Shmeisani Hospital 5669131

University Hospital 545845

Al-Muasher Hospital 5667279

Al-Ahli, Abdali 56641646

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 7771013

Al-Bashir 77511126

Army, Marka 39161115

Queen Alia Hospital 56023050

Arnal Hospital 5674155

ARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital

109983323

Zarqa National Hospital

(09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital

(09)99099

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital

1021275555

Greek Catholic Hospital

102127275

Ibn Al Nafees Hospital

(02)247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital

05314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA

AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

07:15 Sanaa (RJ)

07:25 Damascus (RJ)

09:25 Abu Dhabi (RJ)

10:05 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)

10:05 Beirut (RJ)

10:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)

16:20 Cairo (RJ)

17:15 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)

17:30 London, Frankfurt (RJ)

21:30 Brussels (add) (RJ)

Queen chairs Al Amal board meeting

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Monday chaired the first Board of Trustees meeting of Al Amal Centre to discuss future cooperation and coordination between Al Amal, the Royal Medical Services, the Ministry of Health and Medical Care and the University of Jordan, according to a press release.

Queen Noor, who is the board's chairperson, expressed her appreciation for all those who supported the establishment of the centre, adding that it is the "generosity, compassion and dedication of so many Jordanians who have made this possible."

According to the Queen, Al Amal is considered the largest specialised comprehensive

cancer centre in the region, whose multi-dimensional approach comprises treatment, prevention, early detection, public awareness and education.

"Its ongoing cooperation with leading medical institutions worldwide will enable it to become a centre of excellence," she said.

The Queen noted that while Al Amal is a non-profit institution, it also has significant costs to cover in order to maintain the high quality services it offers, particularly since its ultimate aim is to be able to treat all patients, regardless of their financial ability, the statement continued.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, who is the vice-

chair of the board, expressed the government's support for collaboration between the public health sector and Al Amal Centre, adding that His Majesty King Hussein, in a Royal Decree last October, said: "The successful operation of Al Amal Centre calls for uniting the efforts of all those involved in health care and their complete coordination."

In Jordan, the government covers more than 90 per cent of the cost of cancer care; however, one of the government hospitals' facilities can provide the full range of needed treatment of radiotherapy, chemotherapy and surgery.

Al Amal Centre provides comprehensive treatment through an in-patient hospital

with 120 beds, five operating rooms, a bone marrow transplantation unit, outpatient clinics, radiotherapy and nuclear medicine departments. Its women's centre receives patients for breast cancer screening, mammography, ultrasound, gynaecological exams and education and counselling.

Another feature, the "Cancer Registry," will contribute to and collaborate with the national Centre Registry in order to provide reliable cancer statistics for Jordan and for the region, according to the statement.

Al Amal Centre, which began operations last April, has treated more than 400 patients from Jordan and the region.

Islamic bank provides Jordan with over \$44 million in loans, grants

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Monday signed five agreements to provide Jordan with more than \$44 million in loans and grants to help the country carry out development projects, including improving the infrastructure in poorer districts.

The loan portion of the package amounts to \$43.5 million, while the grant totals \$650,000, according to the agreements.

The agreements were signed on behalf of the IDB by Ahmad Mohammad Ali, the chairman of the bank's board. For Jordan, Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf signed three

of the agreements on financing the government-sponsored social safety package plan, Royal Scientific Society (RSS) President Said Aloush signed one agreement to finance the expansion of the RSS library, and Sameh Madani, director general of the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company, signed one to help expand the Shideh Phosphate Mine in southern Jordan.

The JD431 million social safety package entails improving and modernising infrastructure services in the Kingdom's underdeveloped regions and carrying out projects currently undertaken by the National Aid Fund for poor

families.

The government has announced plans to finance the plan through donations and soft loans from donor and friendly nations and organisations.

Part of the plan is aimed at improving the country's 13 Palestinian refugee camps.

Following the signing ceremony, Dr. Khalaf said a mission from the IDB will arrive next month to discuss the implementation of the agreements.

She thanked the IDB for supporting Jordan's development projects, which have included those concerning health, water and irrigation.

and phosphate, and the construction of the King Abdullah Canal for irrigation in the Jordan Valley.

Earlier Monday, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali met with Dr. Ali and said the government is committed to supporting the Islamic Development Bank in financing projects in the Kingdom.

Dr. Majali praised the bank's role in promoting development projects in Islamic countries and its endeavours to boost inter-Arab and Islamic economic and trade exchanges.

For his part, Dr. Ali said that the bank is satisfied with Jordan's efforts.

Japan provides grant for purchase of medical equipment to treat blood disease

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government of Japan has extended a grant totalling \$91,313 to the Jordanian Blood Diseases Association to finance the purchase of blood separation equipment in order to help thalassemia patients in the Kingdom, according to a Japanese embassy press release Monday.

An agreement to this effect was signed Monday at the Embassy of Japan by Koichi Matsumoto, ambassador of Japan to Jordan, and Jihad Banna, secretary general of the association.

Thalassemia is an endemic hereditary form of anaemia, occurring mainly in people of Mediterranean and Western Asian origin, marked by the abnormal synthesis of haemoglobin and a consequent shortened life span of red blood cells.

It is estimated that more than 1,000 patients in Jordan are suffering from this disease, for which no effective treatment has been found so far. Therefore, patients are required to have their blood changed periodically as long as they live, the statement continued.

Every year at least 100,000 children are born in the world with thalassemia.

The equipment donated by the government of Japan



Japanese Ambassador Koichi Matsumoto and Jordanian Blood Diseases Association Secretary General Jihad Banna Monday sign an agreement whereby the Japanese government will grant the association \$91,313 for the purchase of equipment to treat thalassemia, a rare blood disease (Petra photo)

today will be installed at Princess Rahma Educational Hospital in Irbid, which is one of the cooperative hospitals that treat thalassemia patients living in the northern part of the Kingdom. The equipment will be used to wash blood before changing the blood of patients. It is estimated that over 200 patients in the area will benefit from this facility, according to the

announcement.

This grant has been provided within the framework of the Japanese Grant Assistance for Grassroots Project (GAGP) and is the last of the series for the Japanese fiscal year 1997 ending on March 31, 1998. Through GAGP, the government of Japan has donated \$680,154 in total grants for 11 projects, the statement said.

In remarks following signing ceremony, Mr. Matsumoto stated: "I take great pleasure in signing an agreement on extending assistance to help alleviate the suffering of thalassemia patients. I would like to reiterate that Japan will continue to support the medical sector in Jordan, which is an important factor for meeting basic human needs."

Ministry seeking funds to complete survey of national heritage buildings

By Ahmad Khatib
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan is trying to raise funds to complete a survey of old houses and buildings under an ambitious plan to help conserve and rehabilitate its national heritage.

Mirvat Mamoon, head of the department of architectural heritage at the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment, said the survey targets national buildings built between 1700 and 1950.

Such dwellings do not enjoy the protection granted under the current antiquities law.

The project, launched in early 1997 at a cost of JD1.5 million, is broken into two stages. The first phase includes a survey based on collecting basic information, taking photos, and revising architectural plans. This data will be put into a national register.

The second stage includes preparing technical reports to enable the restoration and rehabilitation of such sites.

"Such projects take a lot of effort, money, and time," Ms. Mamoon told the Jordan Times in an interview.

"The ministry hopes to find proper financing to complete these projects," she added. "Otherwise, the process will take much more time than we expected."

Ms. Mamoon, an engineer, said many commissions in Europe and Asia were interested in financing such projects. But she gave no further details.

"Setting up a Web site about traditional buildings in Jordan is one of our plans to explain to financiers why it is important to preserve such sites."

The survey will cover the northern, central and southern parts of Jordan but will exclude the area covered by the Greater Amman Municipality.

"The municipality deals with sites in its area," Ms. Mamoon said. "However, we are trying to coordinate with it in this matter."

Ms. Mamoon added that the ministry had completed the framework for a plan to register all national heritage dwellings. This will be used as a reference for regulations in cities like Salt, Jerash, Um Qais and Samad — home to houses and streets reflecting decades-old Jordanian architecture.

Salt alone has at least 356 heritage buildings, which along with others have to be

protected from possible demolition due to their old age.

The department also wants to raise public awareness regarding the need to protect Jordan's national heritage and teach locals how to restore such sites to enable them to earn some income and lure tourists.

"It is important to protect Jordan's architectural identity because modern buildings are now spreading in every direction," Ms. Mamoon said.

She said the ministry was looking forward to the inclusion of the Greco-Roman city of Jerash on a list of sites protected by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

"We are trying hard to re-organise buildings around the ancient city of Jerash, especially since some of them are built next to archaeological sites and are therefore affecting the antiquities," she said.

"Promoting the idea of cultural tourism and building the loyalty of citizens is a very important element in the process of restoring and rehabilitating traditional sites," she said.

"The success of such a project depends a lot on the people's sense of responsibility."

Meeting opens on promoting dental health awareness

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Education and Higher Education Mohammad Hamdan Monday said reports from government schools indicate that between 67 and 73 per cent of students complain of some kind of mouth or teeth ailment and 57 per cent suffer from tooth decay.

Addressing a meeting at the Royal Cultural Centre in observance of Oral Health Day, Dr. Hamdan said these figures are disturbing and should prompt the public and the concerned authorities to redouble their efforts in dealing with the situation.

Children should have regular dental checkups, and an awareness campaign among students and parents on dental health should be launched, he said.

Nothing that in 1989 the ministry initiated a health education programme in Jordanian schools in conjunction with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Ministry of Health, Dr. Hamdan said the awareness campaign is continuing in the form of special extracurricular activities at schools and textbooks covering relevant subjects.

In his address, Said Abu Maizar, president of the Jordan Dentists Association (JDA), reiterated the association's previous requests that a national strategy be adopted to raise public awareness on means of preventing tooth decay.

He thanked the Ministry of Education for its decision to accredit a number of dentists to work in schools on raising student awareness on dental health.

Dr. Hamdan opened a special one-week dentistry exhibit at the centre.

The meeting was organised by the JDA in cooperation with the faculties of dentistry at the University of Jordan and the Jordan University of Science and Technology, the Royal Medical Services of the Jordan Armed Forces and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

Human rights group calls for laws ensuring equality for women

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian Society for Human Rights (JSHR) has demanded that Jordanian women be given equal rights with men and that present laws on women and children be amended to provide better protection to vulnerable members of society.

In a statement marking International Women's Day, JSHR noted that the country's women have assumed responsibilities in almost all sectors of work — factories, schools, public offices, and hospitals, among other fields. But it said that despite this positive trend, women have not yet been accepted in the political and legislative processes.

"Jordanian women have acquired the right to vote and be elected in general elections, but this right has not yet contributed towards placing women in decision-making positions or higher public services offices, and so the role of women has remained margin-

al," according to the statement. "We are entering the 21st century without a single woman in Parliament, despite the strenuous efforts of women's groups and other organisations during the election campaign."

The organisation said the social, cultural and political leaderships of Jordanian society have a duty to change attitudes towards women, and this change should be manifested in school curricula, the media and social relations.

"The past years have shown that Jordan's endorsements of international accords pertaining to women's rights do not mean anything because the reservations expressed about these agreements remain in place, and as long as the government fails to fulfil its commitments, as expressed in these agreements," said the statement.

The statement demanded that the Jordanian civil status

law be amended or replaced by one providing real protection to women's rights. It said a draft law prepared by the National Task Force for Children should be adopted as soon as possible, especially in view of the growing number of incidents of child and woman abuse.

Coinciding with the release of the statement, the Jordanian National Committee for Women issued a statistical bulletin on women's participation in the socio-economic and political life in the Kingdom.

According to the bulletin, females account for 47.8 per cent of the population, the mortality rate among mothers stands at 41.1 for every 100,000 births, and the rate of illiteracy among women is estimated at more than 20 per cent.

The bulletin said females older than 15 constitute 13.6 per cent of the overall workforce.

Experts undecided on impact of television violence on children

By Hind-Lara Mango
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Sociologists, psychologists and educationalists have established a link between violence on television and its impact on children but remain divided on how best to shield youngsters from negative effects.

All have theories on how to best deal with the problem, with some advocating limited television viewing under parental guidance and others promoting unrestricted access to TV screens.

Josi Salem-Pickartz, a clinical psychologist, said studies over the past 35 years have indicated a definite correlation between violence on television and its impact on children with already aggressive tendencies or social environment.

"If an aggressive child watches violence on television regularly, then this will increase his/her aggressive behaviour towards others," she told the Jordan Times in a recent interview.

"Violence on television is an outlet for the frustrated and angry child," she said. "For others, it fosters fear of the world."

The effect of violence on television becomes even more pronounced if it is being absorbed by a child who is subjected to physical abuse at home, Dr. Salem-Pickartz added.

"If a child is already exposed to violence in the home, then watching it on television only reinforces this phenomenon as a natural occurrence in the child's mind."

According to Sabri Irbeihat, a criminologist, violence is a way of communication and some children are subject to such a method of communication.

He argued that if children are exposed to violence at home, it is more probable "that they will export this violence outside the home environment."

Dr. Salem-Pickartz has noticed households in Jordan where televisions are switched on in the early hours of the morning and turned off late at night.

"Very often children's consumption of television goes unsupervised," she said.

To limit the effect of television violence on children, Dr. Salem-Pickartz advocated a maximum of one to two hours of daily television viewing with parental guidance. "Parents should control what a child watches and not allow viewing of anything and everything that is being aired on television," she said.

"Watching television in general is a very passive act and does not promote the overall development of the child," Dr. Salem-Pickartz also stressed the need for local and Arab TV productions to cater to the needs of children in Arab societies in terms of tradition and culture.

But Dr. Irbeihat, a member of the mother and child taskforce, disagreed.

"I do not believe that by having Arab productions for children the effect of violence on television on children would be minimised," he said.

"We live in a complex and sophisticated global village where it is no longer possible to isolate a child from what is being aired on television," he added.

Dr. Irbeihat told the Jordan Times that a child's imagination should be stretched and that he/she should be exposed to all sorts of experiences, not only to the ones advocating Arab traditions and culture.

"We cannot build a fence around a child by banning things that come into the home, school, or environment."

But he agreed with Dr. Salem-Pickartz that the best solution for limiting the impact of television violence on children is by emphasising the role of parents.

"If television is used as an educational tool and parents do not allow their children to watch it unchecked, then its impact would be powerful and positive."

But, "if they are left to watch television unsupervised and are unable to differentiate between what is real and what is not, then problems occur," Dr. Irbeihat said.

Children, he said, go through a phase in which they emulate television heroes.

"This is a natural part of a

child's experience, but if it is left unsupervised by the family, then it might have a negative impact on the child," Dr. Irbeihat maintained.

Television nowadays could be a powerful educational tool, sociologists and educationalists said.

But many are divided whether Jordanian educationalists are aware of this power.

"I don't think that this is being done in Jordan," said Adnan Awamleh, general manager of Arab TeleMedia Services.

Dr. Salem-Pickartz echoed similar views, saying that children were watching a lot of cartoons which had a fair deal of violence in them with little educational value.

Professionals believe that television stations should alert parents beforehand to any programmes deemed unsuitable for children.

Mr. Awamleh said that Jordan should have a committee to monitor children's programmes to meet the basic needs of today's children.

"When violence itself is emphasised in a show, then this is negative. But if it is used to highlight that violence is bad, then I think that this conveys a positive message to children," said Mr. Awamleh, who has produced and directed programmes for the past thirty years.

Violence, he said, stimulates and satisfies a child's needs. "You need to have a conflict between bad and good in these films to stimulate and attract the child's imagination." Most cartoons aired on Jordanian television come from Japan, Korea and Europe and are dubbed locally.

"We try to adapt the meaning of the story so that it will meet the needs of the Arab child, but this is not enough," Mr. Awamleh said.

The Arab League, he said, never attempted to invest in children's cartoons because they are an extremely expensive venture.

"Children are not a priority for them, though our children are the investment for the future."

What's Going On

THEATRE
German film, "Im Kiez," at Lacey, with...
Arabian Nights, at...
Moll Flanders, at...
Jabal Amman, at...
EXHIBITIONS
Paintings by...
Arabian Nights, at...
Moll Flanders, at...
Jabal Amman, at...
LECTURES
Contemporary...
Arabian Nights, at...
Moll Flanders, at...
Jabal Amman, at...

NEWS IN BRIEF

Education minister, Iranian ambassador review bilateral ties
AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Education and Higher Education Mohammad Hamdan Monday received Iranian Ambassador Mohammad Ali Subhani, with whom he discussed bilateral relations and means of furthering them, particularly in the field of education. The two also reviewed ways of developing cooperation in educational matters among institutions of higher learning in both countries.
Badran meets with UNRWA chief
AMMAN (Petra) — Department of Palestinian Affairs Director General Ibrahim Badran Monday received Peter Hansen, the director general of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Dr. Badran and Mr. Hansen discussed means of boosting cooperation between the agency and the government.

Double blast rocks Pakistan with five dead, 47 injured

LAHORE, Pakistan (AFP) — Bomb attacks on a train and a courthouse Monday left at least five people dead, injured 47 and increased growing religious and social tensions in Pakistan.

The Chiltan Express was blown off the tracks as it travelled between the Punjab capital Lahore and Quetta in the southwestern province of Baluchistan.

At least five people were killed and 35 injured, officials said.

The second bomb went off outside a court at Sukkur in southern province of Sindh leaving a dozen people injured, three of them in critical condition.

The train bomb went off in a crowded car, which railway officials said was completely destroyed by the blast.

Ambulance sources said several of the injured were in critical condition.

The explosion came as the train passed through a railway station near the Punjab jungle resort of Changa Manga, about 100 kilometres south of Lahore, police said.

The injured were taken to a civil hospital in the nearby town of Patoki.

The second bomb was placed in a wooden cabin near the court in Sukkur in Sindh province and went off as the judge started proceedings against defendants accused of murders and involvement in tribal feuds.

The blast triggered panic and injured people standing outside the crowded court, witnesses said.

Police said it was a "terrorist act" that could have been intended to free some prisoners. None of the defendants escaped however.

No one claimed responsibility for either of the two explosions.

A string of previous bombings this year, including a train explosion and a bus blast, left about a dozen people dead in Punjab, plagued by sectarian unrest, and eight fatalities in the Sindh capital of Karachi.

Last year, 48 people were killed and 148 injured in 19 bomb blasts in Punjab, according to official figures.

Terrorist attacks in Punjab, blamed on extremist Sunni and Shiite Muslim groups, have claimed around 250 lives since early 1997.

The authorities said at least 10 people were detained last week in Punjab over a series of attacks and murders.

But several accused terrorists remain at large and the government has offered cash rewards for the arrest of militants belonging to extremist groups from the majority Sunni and minority Shiite communities.

The government last year set up special anti-terrorism courts to carry out the speedy punishment of accused in sectarian unrest and other serious crimes.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif last week announced plans to organise nationwide special police squads to hunt down terrorists.

"We have asked the provincial governments to induct the best people into the squads so that terrorists are caught," he told reporters in Karachi Friday.

The sectarian vendetta and the troubles in Karachi, where hundreds of died in recent years, are considered a serious problem scaring off foreign investors.

Mr. Sharif, condemning the murder of two Iranians last month in Karachi, said a "foreign hand" was involved in terrorism and sabotage in a bid to damage Pakistan's relations with Iran.



Sitarum Kesri, walks past a cut-out of Sonia Gandhi, after he announced his decision to quit as the president of the Congress Party in New Delhi (Reuters photo)

Congress chief quits, appeals to Gandhi's widow after Indian polls flop

NEW DELHI (AFP) — The president of India's once-dominant Congress resigned here Monday after his party's poor showing in national elections and called on the widow of assassinated former Premier Rajiv Gandhi to replace him.

Sitarum Kesri, once dubbed "an old man in a hurry" by political opponents, quit after his party won 140 out of 545 seats in the February-March hung polls, equalling its worst-ever showing.

The party's main rivals, the Hindu nationalists, are expected to come to power at the head of a coalition. Mr. Kesri, 82, told a press conference: "I have resigned from the post of party presidentship ... I think it is my duty to do so."

"I ask Sonia Gandhi to take over the party post now. I was not told to do this by anybody, not even Sonia." The Congress, once dominated by the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty, is in steady decline after ruling India for 45 of 50 years since independence.

The party turned to Sonia Gandhi, the widow of former Indian Premier Rajiv Gandhi, to act as its campaign figurehead during the polls, leaving Mr. Kesri sidelined.

Mr. Kesri succeeded disgraced former Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, who is now awaiting trial for corruption, as Congress president at the end of 1996.

A former party treasurer and seen as a backroom "fixer" rather than a leader of charisma, he failed to reunite the party's various factions.

Mr. Kesri said: "I will not take over the party post again, even if offered ... at this age if I take a decision, it will be final."

He received the "old man in a hurry" tag from opponents who accused him of wanting to become prime minister at any cost after he brought down two minority coalitions within eight months last year, leading to the February-March polls.

The Italian-born Sonia Gandhi, 51, had no previous political experience before agreeing to campaign on the Congress' behalf.

She rejected Congress' appeals to stand as a candidate, saying she did not want office "for now." There was no immediate reaction from her staff Monday.

Sonia Gandhi launched her campaign from the spot where her husband was assassinated in 1991 in southern India and addressed around 140 rallies across the country, some attracting 300,000 people.

The Congress claimed she helped revive morale but most analysts believe her contribution failed to translate into votes.

The nationalists, hoping to come to power next week, branded her a "movie star" and a "foreigner" with no place in Indian politics and scoffed at the Congress' reliance on the "personality cult" surrounding the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty.

The Congress' share of the popular vote has declined in every election since 1984.

Vital Gadgil, the Congress spokesman, said Monday: "It is very obvious that he decided to step down to pave way for Sonia Gandhi ... this decision has nothing to do with the outcome of the elections or the performance of the party."

He said he had followed with pleasure reports on the assassination last Jan. 30 of Seville Deputy Mayor Alberto Jimenez-Becerra and his wife Ascension.

"I like seeing their faces deformed by pain," he said. "Their tears make us laugh, and in the end we will be laughing out loud," wrote the detainee, who has been sentenced to 2,000 years in prison for 20 murders.

The armed wing of the ETA has designated Inaki de Juana as one of its representatives if the government agrees to negotiate with the some 500 ETA detainees.

PP politicians have become a privileged target for the ETA in its campaign for negotiations on its separatist demands, with four killed since July.

Indonesian student demos mount

JAKARTA (AFP) — Student demonstrations gathered pace Monday as Indonesia's President Suharto prepared to return to office for another five-year term after 32 years as head of state.

Hundreds of students rallied at two campuses in the capital, while similar protests were staged in the cities of Surabaya and Bandung.

Several activists were arrested at another demonstration in downtown Jakarta.

More than 1,000 students rallied at the University of Indonesia's sprawling southern Jakarta campus under the watch of armed riot police and troops, though the event passed peacefully.

A large poster carried by the students depicted a crowned Mr. Suharto sitting on a throne perched on piles of money, with the words "absolute power" splashed across the drawing.

The government, never happy with public criticism, has taken particular exception to comparisons between Mr. Suharto and monarchs, insisting he is in power by virtue of his popularity, not presumption of some divine right.

The students, repeating the demands of previous rallies, called for economic and political reforms and urged an electoral committee due to reappoint Mr. Suharto to reject his candidacy for a seventh consecutive term.

Mr. Suharto is the sole candidate for the 1998-2003 presidency, despite growing opposition to his leadership of the world's fourth most populous nation.

Hundreds of students also rallied at the private Catholic Atmajaya University campus, near the venue of the 1,000-member electoral committee meeting.

"We want to be heard by the people's representatives," said one banner carried by the marchers, who were led by a group carrying a coffin draped with the red-and-white Indonesian flag.

"The aspirations of the people are not those of the political and economic elites," "We want a clean government," read others.

Scores of police and soldiers kept guard outside the university but did not intervene.

There have been dozens of protests at universities across the country in the last two weeks.

Authorities have allowed demonstrations within universities but broken up those which ventured outside.

At least four people were arrested when 20 labour and student activists protested on a busy Jakarta road Monday against price rises and to demand improved labour rights, a witness said.

The demonstrators, including activists from the Sejahtera independent labour union, carried banners demanding lower prices for essential items, the witness added.

Police arrested four demonstrators 20 minutes after they started the protest as a large crowd watched.

In the East Java province capital of Surabaya, hundreds of University of Surabaya students held a free-speech forum in a field in front of the campus library. A university staff member said some students called for the electoral committee to "find a fresh leader."

Hundreds of students at Surabaya's Sunan Ampel Islamic University campus staged a silent protest Sunday, with many plastering their mouths with photocopies of 50,000 rupiah bills to show their disapproval of the electoral committee.

In West Java province, a similar forum was held at Pajajaran University outside the provincial capital Bandung with a few dozens student present, said campus security officer Rohman.

Thousands of students staged a rally at Pajajaran University main campus in Bandung Saturday. Similar rallies were also held at two other Bandung campuses.

Meanwhile, reports said police detained six students in the central Java city of Yogyakarta Sunday and planned to charge them for inciting others in a protest over the economic crisis.

Police arrested 43 students as they attempted to march on a central square, the Suara Karya daily said, but they were released after questioning. Yogyakarta chief detective Lieutenant Colonel Erwin Tohing was quoted as saying:

"There are too many free associations in the report," he told AFP.

The frigates were delivered unarmed and are being equipped with Taiwanese, American and Italian weapons systems and French-made electronics.

The \$2.8 billion deal, together with the sale of 60 Mirages jets for \$3.8 billion, caused a serious rift between France and China, leading Beijing to order the closure of the French consulate in the southern city of Guangzhou.

The consulate was officially reopened in June 1997.

China has warned other nations against selling arms to Taiwan, which it regards as a renegade province since the communist forces drove nationalist troops here in 1949 at the end of a civil war.

Beijing has threatened to attack the island should it declare formal independence, a move prompting Taiwan to seek more advanced weaponry for self-defence.

China says U.S. has no right to criticise its record

BEIJING (R) — China Monday denounced U.S. criticism of its human rights record, saying it was "based on hegemonic ambitions and mercantile considerations."

The United States had "no right to lambaste China's human rights" record, screamed the headline of a commentary in the official China daily.

In its annual human rights report, the United States said there was some improvement in China's human rights record last year, but serious abuses remained.

"The U.N. human rights commission is scheduled to meet in Geneva this month, and China is eager to avoid any censure."

The European Union agreed last month not to table a resolution criticising China at the forthcoming U.N. meeting.

EU countries and the United States have previously backed such resolutions every year since the Chinese army crushed student-led pro-democracy protests in Beijing in June 1989, but China has always mustered enough support to block the moves.

The newspaper commentary said the hinged attacks on China were "based on hegemonic ambitions and mercantile considerations, rather than genuine concern about the well-being of the people of the target country."

as was claimed."

The United States has said it could still put its weight behind a resolution criticising China despite the change in the EU's stance.

The newspaper commentary said the United States was now alone and should mend its ways.

"As the Europeans have turned to dialogue for addressing their human rights concern in China, the Americans are now left alone in their assault on China on the international human rights battlefield," the China daily said.

The commentary said every member of the international community should turn to cooperative dialogue to "cope with discord over issues as sophisticated and sensitive as human rights, instead of using confrontational coercion."

Beijing rejects criticism of its human rights record as interference in its affairs and argues that feeding and clothing 1.2 billion people is more important than political rights.

The commentary defended China's interpretation of human rights, saying it has been viewed from different perspectives by people living in different times and places.

To the founding fathers of the United States, "human rights meant the right to cultivate the land and enjoy their harvests, elect their own congresses and enact

their own laws, free from the royal shackles of the British monarchy," it said.

To Communist-era China, "human rights meant the right to construct a powerful socialist homeland free from the oppression of warlords, landlords, bureaucrats and plutocrats, free from subjugation by foreign powers," the commentary said.

"How can a manager in the U.S. business legion, led by tycoons like Bill Gates and Andrew Grove, think in the same way as a Cambodian retailer who is barely able to keep his auto parts shop going in that war-torn country?" it said.

"By plotting to brand China a 'human rights abuser', the West has taken pot shots not only at China, but at the entire developing world which has only just shaken off colonial yoke during the past half-century."

Last week, the London-based human rights group Amnesty International said that despite offers of dialogue and human rights concessions from China "little has changed in practice," and it urged governments not to relax pressure on Beijing.

Amnesty said thousands of protesters and suspected government opponents had been detained arbitrarily in the past year. Torture was widespread in police cells and prisons.

Immigration and EU are main Danish election issues

COPENHAGEN (R) — The treatment of refugees and other immigrants, and the European Union have been the main issues in campaigning for Denmark's general election Wednesday.

The ruling centre-left government led since 1993 by Social Democratic Prime Minister Poul Nyrup-Rasmussen wants to keep Denmark's liberal immigration policies intact.

The opposition centre-right bloc says genuine refugees persecuted in their home countries should still be welcome, but it wants tighter restrictions on other immigrants.

The centre-right parties also want to cut Danish foreign aid. But the centre democrats, a small centrist party whose support the bigger right-wing parties are likely to need to form a government, are staunchly opposed to tighter immigration rules and any cut in foreign aid.

In an opinion poll, 43 per cent of Danes said immigration was the most important issue. Those listing it as the top priority were about evenly divided between keeping Denmark's doors open and demanding tougher rules.

Danes are scheduled to vote in a referendum on May 28 on the European Union's Amsterdam Treaty. All mainstream parties are in favour of a "yes."

But during the parliamentary election campaign, the centre-left and the centre-right have accused each other of undermining the chances for a "yes". Some analysts say reelection of Mr. Rasmussen's coalition would improve the chance that many Eurosceptic Social Democrats will vote "yes."

Overall, opinion polls show 40 per cent of Danes in favour of approving the Amsterdam Treaty and 30 per cent against with the rest undecided.

Health care has been another hot election theme with Mr. Rasmussen's coalition promising to shorten waiting lines. The opposition liberal party wants to allow people to choose freely between public and private health care services.

Other major campaign issues have included care for the elderly and children, primary school education, law and order and the environment.

Hong Kong's Tung mixes signals on media freedom

HONG KONG (R) — Pro-democracy groups Monday accused Hong Kong leader Tung Chee-hwa of giving mixed signals on press freedom and said they suspected a planned anti-subversion law would restrict the media.

Both Mr. Tung and his number two, Chief Secretary Anson Chan, have reaffirmed media freedom in recent days but the political groups said Mr. Tung had sent out confused signals.

Pro-democracy activists Monday demonstrated in defence of press freedom outside the office of China's state Xinhua news agency.

The debate was sparked in Beijing last week by Xu Simin, a veteran leftist, who attacked public broadcaster Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) as a remnant of British colonial rule and said it should be turned into a government mouthpiece.

Former journalist Emily Lau, leader of the pro-democracy frontier group, said Mr. Tung and China were setting the stage to enact an anti-subversion law that would limit press freedom.

"They are preparing public opinion for legislation. There will be a law against subversion and it will be quite harsh," she told Reuters.

Hong Kong is due to adopt an anti-subversion law after May's legislative election, the first since the end of British rule last year.

Chinese politburo member Li Ruihuan gave assurances over the weekend, signalling that Beijing actually disapproved of Mr. Xu's attack. Mr. Li stressed the need for tact when discussing Hong Kong.

"If handled improperly, it will undermine the implementation of the one-country two-systems policy," Mr. Li said.

The policy is the core of the autonomy granted Hong Kong when Britain handed its former colony back to China last July.

The office of Hong Kong's best known pro-democracy leader, Martin Lee, believes that Mr. Tung might enact legislation curbing RTHK's editorial freedom and that he would try to gag the media.

"He did not back off. This is not the end of this by a long shot," said Mr. Lee's adviser Minky Worden.

RTHK staff had spoken of being under pressure from members of the government over editorial freedom for a long time, she said.

Pro-democracy groups took this as a sign that the subversion law, when enacted, would be tough and could make open criticism of Beijing a criminal act.

But pro-democracy supporters accused Mr. Tung of waffling. He first defended freedom of speech and information as "something we treasure."

But a day later, Sunday, Mr. Tung issued a stern warning to critics of Beijing that Hong Kong would not become a centre of subversion or "an anti-Beijing base."

Pro-democracy groups took this as a sign that the subversion law, when enacted, would be tough and could make open criticism of Beijing a criminal act.

مكتبة النور

Russian PM looks to TV for presidential profile

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin stares into the camera and feigns indignation that viewers could think he is setting out his stall for a bid at the presidency.

But nobody is fooled. The Russian premier, who has survived more than five precarious years at the government helm, and who recently gained the upper hand over the young reformists in his cabinet, is increasingly seen as a pretender to the Kremlin throne, despite protestations that the 2000 elections are far from his thoughts.

"I haven't even thought about that," Mr. Chernomyrdin said, when asked Saturday in a question-and-answer session on Russian television about the next presidential polls, at which Russians may have to choose a successor to incumbent Boris Yeltsin.

"We shouldn't be thinking about elections today but about how to resolve those problems" facing the Russian government, he added, turning his business-as-usual approach to the day-to-day management of the executive.

"Today I am responsible for the government and its work, so let's talk about elections when it gets down to elections," Mr. Chernomyrdin said in the pre-recorded, obviously staged programme, for which the questions were carefully pre-selected.

The fact that the 15-minute question-and-answer session is to become a weekly event, with the premier offering soothing responses to the complaints, queries and suggestions of the Russian public cannot help but enhance the rather uninspiring image of the government chief, analysts believe.

Mr. Chernomyrdin "has always been perceived as an economic rather than political official," said Yuri Levada, head of the Vision opinion poll institute.

"He has carved out for himself the image of a man who has no designs on becoming president, but just the president's right-hand man, and his image is thus quite weak," added Alexander Osol of the Public Opinion Foundation.

As a result, Mr. Chernomyrdin, who has proved more resilient than many thought since becoming prime minister in December 1992, currently scores only a two-to-three per cent popularity rating among Russian voters as against around 10 per cent for Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, seen as a possible election rival.

"But all that can change with a strong press campaign and a good electoral machine," Mr. Levada said.

Mr. Chernomyrdin has a strong power base centred around the Gazprom gas giant which he used to head up, which has given him formidable influence across Russia's energy sector and in national and regional media outlets, analyst Nikolai Petrov noted.

Financial backing, moreover, would not be a problem. Influential businessman Boris Berezovsky, who helped finance Mr. Yeltsin's reelection in 1996, said recently he considered Mr. Chernomyrdin to be the best candidate to succeed the current Russian president.

Mr. Yeltsin himself gave Mr. Chernomyrdin a vote of approval at the end of January by vowing that the premier would remain in his post until January 1999, giving him the upper hand once again over the young reformist element in his cabinet.

All of which leaves just one potential hitch. Mr. Chernomyrdin has said he will yield to Mr. Yeltsin if the Russian president decides to stand for a third term.



Ethnic Albanian leader Ljulljeta Pulja Bedri (centre) flashes the victory sign during protest in Kosovo's capital Pristina. Several thousand Albanians in the troubled Serbian province of Kosovo demonstrated against a police crackdown that has left dozens dead, as major powers met to discuss the crisis and how to stop it spreading (Reuters photo)

Japanese government wrangles with governor over nuclear waste

ROKKASHO, Japan (AFP) — The Japanese government launched a last-minute effort Monday to persuade a provincial governor to let in a shipment of nuclear waste reprocessed in France, officials said.

Governor Morio Kimura was in Tokyo demanding a meeting with Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto on the eve of the arrival of the British-flagged ship carrying the nuclear waste to a port in his Aomori prefecture.

Mr. Kimura has threatened to stop the freighter from berthing at Mutsu Ogawara port if Mr. Hashimoto refuses to discuss the nation's nuclear safety policy and economic aid in the form of reduced electricity charges.

Instead, he held talks with science and technology agency chief Sadakazu Tanigaki and International Trade and Industry Minister Mitsuo Horiuchi, officials said, without disclosing details of the talks.

"My mind has not changed, and I want the government to cope with the matter sincerely," Jiji Press news agency quoted Mr. Kimura as telling reporters after the meeting with Tanigaki.

The governor's demands to meet Mr. Hashimoto earlier won a cool reception from Chief Cabinet Secretary Kamezo Muraoka.

"We would not need ministers if everything went to the premier," Mr. Muraoka told a news conference.

advising him to talk first to the chiefs of the science and technology agency and other bodies supervising nuclear policy.

The reprocessed nuclear waste is due to dock at Mutsu Ogawara port in the village of Rokkasho, Aomori prefecture, on the northern tip of Japan's Honshu main island.

In Rokkasho Monday, a few tents for anti-nuclear protesters were set up near the port. One demonstrator said he had arrived two days earlier to protest.

Banners carried such messages as "Stop reprocessing that deprives us of the future" and "Don't foist nuclear garbage on us."

In the evening, a group of 20 people including a Buddhist monk gathered in front of the port gate, standing in a circle around a model of a canister carrying nuclear waste and singing a folk song.

Around the model canister, there were flowers and paper lanterns with slogans such as "If it is safe, why don't you take it to Tokyo."

As police guarded the gate to the port, about a dozen workers were seen practising unloading containers from a ship.

The freighter Pacific Swan, which set out from the northern French port of Cherbourg on Jan. 21, was scheduled to sail into Mutsu Ogawara early Tuesday with about 30 tonnes of high-level nuclear waste.

The nuclear waste is a product of reprocessing of

spent nuclear fuel that four of Japan's electric power companies send to France because Japan does not yet have facilities to reprocess spent fuel.

The 50,000-tonne ship, owned by the British company PNTL, is carrying three containers packed with canisters of vitrified waste.

The containers were loaded in France amid protests from environmental activists, after being brought by train from the Compagnie Generale des Matieres Nucléaires (COGEMA) reprocessing plant at La Hague near Cherbourg.

The Pacific Swan is equipped with a double hull and two engine systems and is being monitored by satellite during its voyage, according to COGEMA, which says the operation poses no risk to the environment.

The shipment is the third of its kind to Japan under a processing agreement signed between COGEMA and 10 Japanese electricity generating companies.

The first operation involved 28 canisters between Feb. 23 and April 25, 1995, and the second involved 40 canisters between Jan. 13 and March 18 last year amid protests from hundreds of demonstrators.

Entry into the Japanese port was delayed by several hours for the first operation due to objections from the governor.

13-year-old Japanese boy stabs fellow pupil to death

TOKYO (AFP) — A 13-year-old Japanese schoolboy stabbed a fellow pupil to death Monday in a quarrel that erupted during a break between lessons, police alleged.

The victim, Makoto Kato, also 13, was stabbed and wounded in the left side of his chest during the attack in a junior high school classroom, a police official said.

The boy staggered to a balcony outside the classroom, where other children witnessed the killing, and collapsed before being rushed to hospital where he died about two hours later, the police official said.

"He collapsed at the balcony in front of his classroom," a police official said.

The attack in Saitama prefecture, 50 kilometres north of Tokyo, was the latest in a series of school stabbings that have shocked Japan and led to calls for restrictions on knife sales to minors.

Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto told reporters he knew few details as yet but added: "I am very saddened by the event. I offer my deepest condolences to the victim's family."

Chief Cabinet Secretary

Kamezo Muraoka said he hoped the education ministry, schools, homes and local communities would search for ways to tackle the problem.

"I think the younger generation lacks the basic ethical sense of the importance of life and of the difference between good and bad," he was quoted as saying by Kyodo News agency.

The suspect, whom police described as being in "a state of agitation," allegedly used a knife with a folding blade measuring eight centimetres, the police official said.

"We are questioning the boy," he said.

Jiji Press news agency quoted the boy as saying: "I don't remember why I stabbed him. I did it in a state of delirium." The report could not be confirmed by police.

Takao Suzuki, a vice principal at Higashi Junior High School, told AFP: "We are investigating details of the tragic incident including what exactly happened between the two students."

Neither the suspect nor the victim were considered "problem children," he said. "I feel terrible for the tragedy and for causing dis-

tress to parents and our community. We have been urging our students not to bring knives to school." The school closed in the afternoon, cancelling a farewell party that had been arranged for graduating students.

Police said they were alerted to the attack by ambulance services which had been called by the junior high school.

Among other knife attacks, a Japanese court on Feb. 24 sent a 13-year-old boy to reform school for stabbing his teacher to death when she scolded him for being late.

The pupil stabbed 26-year-old English teacher Kayoko Koshizuka with a knife seven times in a hallway and she died one hour after being taken to hospital on Jan. 28.

Juvenile crime has led to calls from politicians including the prime minister for a rethink about the roles of society, authorities, families and children.

In May 1997, the nation was rocked when a 14-year-old boy murdered and beheaded his 11-year-old playmate and killed another 10-year-old girl with a hammer in Kobe, western Japan.

Kosovo neighbours struggle for united Balkan front

VIENNA (AFP) — Kosovo's neighbours, in the front line if unrest there spreads, are struggling to launch a home-grown diplomatic initiative to prevent a new flare-up of violence in the Balkans, analysts said Monday.

Three years after the end of the Bosnian war, the countries of southeastern Europe are having problems mounting a united front over the crisis in the troubled Yugoslav province.

While the international community mulls what it can do, four countries — Greece, Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria — have held a series of bilateral meetings.

But a three-week old Bulgarian attempt to organise a joint stand has so far come to nothing.

"The Bulgarian idea is that foreign ministers from southeastern Europe, who remained silent and couldn't agree on the Albanian crisis last year, could at least say something and say it together," said a diplomatic source in Vienna.

"These countries would like to show a certain regional solidarity in southeastern Europe, but they are having problems. And time is of the essence," said the source.

The countries fear that an extension of the conflict could lead to a massive exodus from Kosovo, whose population is 90 per cent ethnic Albanian.

Regional bilateral meet-

ings have multiplied since last week.

Friday Greek Foreign Minister Theodore Pangalos met Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, while Turkish Premier Mesut Yilmaz flew to Sofia Saturday followed by Romanian Foreign Minister Andrei Plesu Monday.

The Bulgarian initiative was launched three weeks ago. But Sofia's delegates at a meeting of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) last Thursday admitted that a joint statement was still not completed.

In particular Greece has declined to join the

Bulgarian initiative, arguing that "any initiative on Kosovo must include all the countries in the region with a role to play, and of course the European Union."

Romania has declined to comment. "We will study the situation in Kosovo and what needs to be done for regional stability," said Mr. Plesu on his arrival in Sofia Monday.

Turkish Prime Minister Yilmaz meanwhile said that Ankara, which has historic links with Kosovo dating from the Ottoman empire, "will be happy if all the Balkan countries support this initiative."

Albania, which has not been specifically asked to join the Bulgarian initiative, says it "supports any initiative which would end the violence in Kosovo," said Tirana foreign ministry spokesman Sokol Gjoka.

But he added such an initiative must "be accompanied by efforts and initiatives by international bodies aimed at putting pressure on Belgrade," he said.

All sides fear the conflict spreading. "One thing the international community must do is reassure Kosovo's immediate neighbours," said the Vienna diplomat.

"The whole of the Balkans is threatened, because numerous countries would feel they were entitled to join in" if the conflict spread, said Macedonia's Defence Minister Lazar Kitanovski.

Yugoslav officials take diplomats to Kosovo

BELGRADE (AFP) — Yugoslav officials took a group of around 40 foreign diplomats Sunday to two villages in the Drenica region of Kosovo at the centre of a massive police operation this week, the state-run news agency Tanjug reported.

The diplomats from 40 different countries visited the villages of Prekaz and Likosane, the agency said.

Yugoslav officials said the villages were used by ethnic Albanian separatists, who they described "terrorists". The operation to force the separatists out of the area has left dozens dead this week and aroused growing international concern.

The agency said the trip was organised by the Yugoslav foreign ministry and was intended to "allow Yugoslav and foreign public opinion to be informed of the real situation" in the region.

Authorities were expected to show the diplomats where a man they named as Adem Jashari, an ethnic Albanian separatist leader, was hiding before, they say, he was killed last week in the Serbian offensive.

Albanian sources have cast doubts on the reports of Jashari's death and disputed claims he was a leader of the separatist Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK), a movement Belgrade describes as a "terrorist" organisation.

Since the Serbian security forces launched their sweep against separatists in the mostly Albanian-speaking province last weekend more than 50 people have died.

Belgrade admits that more than 50 have died while Albanian sources say more than 75 people have been killed.

Thai hospital offers huge discounts on basic treatment

BANGKOK (AFP) — One of Thailand's largest hospitals is offering package deals with discounts of up to 40 per cent on common medical procedures in a bid to soften the blow of the economic crisis, officials said Monday.

Bumrungrad Hospital chief executive Curtis Schroeder said the hospital had slashed prices on a range of treatments and drugs in response to the economic slump.

Fifty-five packaged deals were being offered for procedures ranging from the delivery of babies to heart surgery and radiation cancer treatment, he said.

"I believe that Thailand now represents one of the best values in medical care anywhere in the world," he said.

"Since 1995 Bumrungrad has not raised its prices on most key items such as room and nursing charges, making us very price competitive in the market."

He said the discounts did not compromise the level or quality of care.

The hospital had also begun offering locally produced generic drugs as alternatives to the more expensive and until recently more popular western brands.

"In the past our patients have generally demanded the imported brand name drugs but we have seen an increased interest in generic drugs which are often less costly," Mr. Schroeder said.

Other private hospitals in Thailand have been forced to cut costs to protect their market share against the cheaper public hospitals.

British madcow inquiry kicks off with plea for more time

LONDON (AFP) — An inquiry into the causes and handling of the so-called "madcow" crisis opened here Monday amid public testimony from witnesses and a call from the head of the probe for more time to consider the issue.

Appeal Court Judge Lord Justice Phillips said he had asked British Prime Minister Tony Blair for permission to extend the probe for six months beyond its December deadline.

"Having analysed the work to be done, I have concluded that it cannot be completed within a timescale that will result in a report at the end of the year."

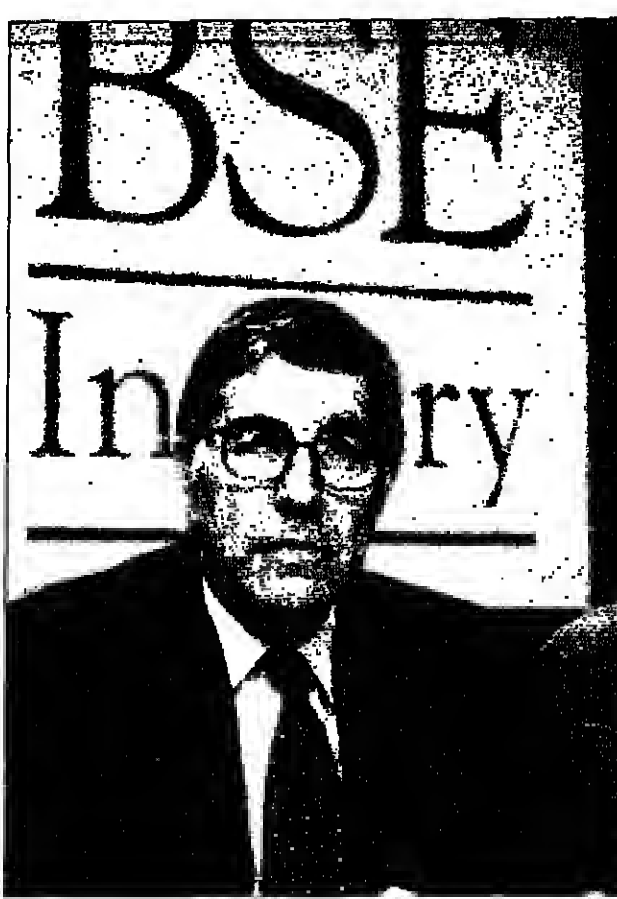
"I am not prepared to contemplate a report that is superficial because it has been too rushed, and I don't believe that those who are anxiously looking forward to receiving this report would wish us to sacrifice thoroughness for speed."

"Accordingly I have asked the prime minister to give us an extra six months in order to achieve the task that he has set us and I hope that this is something that he will feel able to do," the judge said.

He was speaking on the first day of public hearings on madcow disease, or Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), which has killed at least 170,000 animals in Britain. The disease is thought to have been spread by cattle being fed a diet of contaminated sheep's brains.

The human equivalent of BSE, a new strain of the brain wasting condition Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease, has claimed 23 victims here. Scientists have made the link between this new variant CJD and consumption of infected flesh.

In March 1996, the British government admitted that this



Sir Nicholas Phillips, chairman of Britain's BSE inquiry at the official start of proceedings (Reuters photo)

link — hitherto denied by ministers — was probable. The European Union immediately imposed a worldwide export ban on British beef.

The inquiry, which is expected to cost more than two million pounds (\$3.26 million), aims to clarify the causes of madcow disease and investigate the way the crisis was handled by the government.

Politicians, scientists, civil servants, representatives of the beef and food industry and relatives of CJD victims will be called to give evidence to the inquiry over the coming four months.

After this first phase of the inquiry, those criticised during the process will be given the chance to respond to charges laid against them.

While in opposition, Mr. Blair's Labour Party persistently argued that the then Conservative government had mishandled the issue, prolonging the suffering of British farmers, whose export markets evaporated overnight.

Those conducting the inquiry have already contacted more than 100 ministers, civil servants and scientists and have compiled a "formidable" body of documentary evidence.

Dog saves boy from drowning

BANGKOK (AFP) — A dog saved a 10-year-old Thai boy from drowning after he leapt into a pond to save his sister and mother from the same fate, police said Monday.

Police said the boy, Ekkarin Piamnoi, jumped into the pond to rescue his nine-year-old sister and his mother, who had gone to

wash themselves after a day of fishing at Suphan Buri, about 100 kilometre south-west of here.

His mother was the first to get into trouble, followed by his younger sister who tried to help even though she could not swim.

Ekkarin jumped in but he also could not swim and was at the point of drowning

when the half-German shepherd dog, Zu, pulled him to safety by the collar of his shirt.

Ekkarin's mother and sister drowned before anyone else could help.

Thai newspapers reported that the family was very poor and would have to rely on charity to pay for funeral expenses.

Inside Baghdad's 'ward of death'

By Robert Fisk

DR. ALI ISMAIL sat in his office, staring in front of him. "When Faisal Abbas died two days ago, I came here, closed the door, sat down and cried," he said. "I gave drugs to him from my own hands. He was like a brother to me. He was only 10-years-old. He was diagnosed with leukaemia three years ago, and we treated him with drugs; he received treatment, but it was only partial because we lack so many drugs."

He blamed the sanctions, of course, for blocking the medicines; and he blamed the 1991 war for turning his paediatric cancer ward into a way-station for dying children, for the infants who — given their first medicines — bleed to death in front of the doctors. There isn't a medical worker at the Al-Mansur who doesn't believe that the West's arsenal in the 1991 Gulf War did not poison the land in which these children tried to grow up. "In three years, I have seen hundreds of children with leukaemia and last year there was a dramatic increase," Dr. Ismail said. "This month, we diagnosed 20 new cases, mostly from the south — from Basra, Nassariyah, Kerbala and Najaf. It's mainly caused by radiation."

The doctors at the Al-Mansur hospital in Baghdad have an odd way of expressing themselves, a scientific-emotional grammar. "We have palliative treatment but not curative treatment," the doctor explained to me, sighing all the while and still staring at the window.

When you walk into the child cancer ward across the hall, you understand why. Little Samar Khadair lies in what the doctors quite casually call the "ward of death." She is only five-years-old but looks much younger, lying shrivelled on her bed, her eyes squeezed shut with pain, her large, unwieldy father — massive in his grey gallabia robe amid such frailty and pain — gently placing a damp yellow compress on her face. She comes from Al-Yusufia on the road to Babylon, the target of regular Allied raids in February



Five-year-old leukaemia victim Samar Khadair: Her father spent £6, which is equal to three months wages, on cyto-toxins for his dying daughter (photo by Robert Fisk)

1991. Samar's father, Jaber, looks poor because he is. He spent 15,000 dinars to buy cyto-toxins for his dying daughter — about £6, but more than three months wages for Jaber. "I sold my car to buy the medicine for her," he told us quietly. And how would he pay for the next dose, we asked? "I will borrow the money," Dr. Ismail, who is resident doctor in the cancer ward, listened in silence. Then he said to us, in English: "I've seen these patients' families so many times. They sell everything in their house, even their beds — and then their child dies anyway."

You cannot move through Baghdad's "ward of death" without two emotions — a deep sense of unease, even shame, that "our" 1991 military victory over the cruel Saddam may well have cre-

ated this purgatory of the innocent by poisoning both the air they breathe and the land they try to grow up in; and a profound admiration for the dignity of the poor Iraqis who sometimes sell their own clothes in a vain effort to save the children who die in their arms.

Nor can one remain unaffected by the bravery of these tiny victims. Ali Hillaal is eight-years-old but looks about four, a weird fringe of hair across the top of his forehead accentuating his baldness. "Yesterday, he had a very severe headache," Dr. Ismail said, smiling at the child. "He was screaming. When I gave him an injection through his vertebrae, he told me he knew the pain of the needle, but that he would be very quiet because he knows I want what is best for him."

Ali Hillaal was malnour-

ished when he was brought here from the town of Dila, east of Baghdad, his home next to a broadcasting transmitter and several factories that were heavily and repeatedly bombed by allied aircraft in February, 1991. He is the fifth child of a family that has no history of cancer. "First he had the mumps, then he had swelling in his chest and abdomen," Dr. Ismail said. "Now the tumour has reached his brain. When the condition reaches this point, the prognosis is very poor."

Ali's mother Fatima remembers the bombing. "There was a strange smell, a burning, choking smell, something like insecticide," she said. And I wondered, listening to her, about those bombs. Was she smelling nitrite, which the doctors blame for some of the leukaemias? Or had "we"

bombed one of Saddam's chemical warfare plants? Latif Abdul Sattar was playing with a small car when I caught sight of him. His smile, beneath the dome of his baldness, suggested life. Diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma three months ago, he has received two cycles of cyto-toxins. "But the third cycle is partial because he's getting only cyclophosphamide adriamycin as a substitute for vincristine," Dr. Ismail said. What Latif needs is produced by a company in Germany called Astra Medica. "We received 20 vials of this 10 days ago — before that, the patient's families were buying it for 160,000 dinars (more than two years' salary for many Iraqis). But still we can't get enough. Latif needs the treatment as long as his malignancy continues."

Dr. Ismail continued his

rounds. Youssef Abdul Raouf Mohammad from Kerbala — close to military bases bombed in 1991 — has gastro-intestinal bleeding. He still has his curly hair and can talk to his parents but has small blood spots in his cheeks, a sure sign of internal bleeding. And Dr. Ismail is bothered by a memory. "Since the U.N. embargo, patients often die before they can receive induction treatment," he says. "They get thrombocytopenia, a severe reduction of blood platelets. They start bleeding everywhere. We had another child like Youssef. He was called Ahmad Fleah. And after we started the cyto-toxin treatment, he started bleeding from his mouth, eyes, ears, nose, and rectum. He bled to death in two weeks."

— The Independent

Epidemic that came in wake of the war

By Robert Fisk
in Baghdad

IT STARTED with a chance conversation with Murtaza Saleh. She was wearing a turban and had cancer. "God knows, maybe the cause is whatever they bombed us with," she said. But Murtaza smoked cigarettes. Her story seemed as normal as it was tragic.

But then it turned out that her husband, a medical doctor, had died of prostate cancer, and three other family members had also died of cancer, some with no history of the disease at all.

I began to ask other Iraqis if they knew of cancer in their family or those of their friends. An Iraqi civil servant was chatting to me in Baghdad one afternoon. "My neighbour's baby is sick," he said. "Her name is Noor Mohamed Yousif. She is only two-and-a-half years old. My neighbour said he knew something was wrong when he saw a sort of shining, glimmering in her eye." The baby had the eye removed — and they will remove the other eye in a few months' time. The doctors said if they didn't do that, the cancer would move to her brain and kill her within a year. The doctors said it was because of the war.

Then in Basra, in the poorest part of town, we asked a group of women about the health of their families. "My husband has cancer," one of them said. Sundus Abdul-Kader, a 33-year-old mother of four, said her aunt had just died of cancer. Two other women interrupted to say they had young sisters suffering from cancer. And so it went on, in a society where, merely to admit to cancer in the family is regarded as a social stigma. We went to the hospitals. And so the story materialised. Why had so many young Iraqis — especially children — suddenly fallen victim to an explosion of leukaemia in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War.

— The Independent

Prince Hassan: 1998 is year of Israeli redeployment in W. Bank

(Continued from page 1)

Norway and Russia.

"On this basis, we expect that the international community move fast to protect the peace process," he said.

The Crown Prince, who hailed Mr. Arafat's "courage, determination, and that of [his] people," said that despite the obstacles, there have been many accomplishments in the peace process, and that "we can look at the glass as half-full."

Asked about Mr. Arafat's comments last month that restarting the intifada was an option, Crown Prince Hassan answered that Arabs in general continuously express despair in relation to the peace process.

"This is the right of every citizen," he said. "But it is also the right of those responsible to remind people that resorting to violence is not necessarily an option," and that there is another alternative, albeit a more difficult one, which is to pursue diplomatic initiatives.

Mr. Arafat responded: "without a doubt the situation is very difficult, but we have many options," adding that he has been calling for an emergency Arab summit.

However, the Palestinian official who requested anonymity, cast doubt on the benefit of restarting the intifada. "Our message for the first time since 1948 that has brought the international community to our side, is one of peace."

He said that such a move would cost the PNA a heavy price, giving Israel the chance to re-enter Palestinian cities again.

In response to the new American initiative, Dr. Erekat said that the Palestine National Authority (PNA) has "heard" of it, but has not been formally approached about it by the U.S. government.

The U.S. is currently calling

for an Israeli troop withdrawal from 13 per cent of the West Bank, while Israel is offering less than 10 per cent.

According to the Oslo peace accords, the second Israeli redeployment is meant to encompass approximately thirty per cent of the area.

The PNA has not yet made a decision about the U.S. initiative, said Dr. Erekat. The main stipulation by the Palestinians is that the proposal be "within the framework and terms of reference of the agreements, also signed by the Americans," he said.

But the Palestinians are "damned if they accept the American proposal, and damned if they don't," said one Palestinian official.

In any case, he said, the Palestinians are banking on the downfall of Mr. Netanyahu in whatever course he chooses to take, explaining that whether the Israeli premier decides to withdraw or not, he will be

faced by insurmountable opposition by his coalition members and/or international pressure.

He saw Jordan's role as pressuring Mr. Netanyahu to implement the peace accords, and exposing his belligerent policies.

"The most country that has been embarrassed by Netanyahu is Jordan. How many times did he make promises to the Kingdom, and then failed to deliver?" he asked.

In talks with Mr. Netanyahu in Tel Aviv today, discussions will focus on the need to "respect the requirements of the Palestinians... and the full implementation of the accords agreed upon," said the Crown Prince.

Dr. Erekat said that Prince Hassan will be "putting Israel in the picture" during his talks with Mr. Netanyahu.

Iraqi oil minister meets Annan to discuss oil-for-food accord

(Continued from page 1)

compensation which would be automatic under the enhanced arrangement.

Iraq has also informed the United Nations that it cannot pump more than \$4 billion worth of oil at current prices, without first repairing its infrastructure, damaged by allied bombing raids during the 1991 Gulf war.

The resolution contains proposals for one-time

spending on infrastructural projects, but Iraq is objecting to the United Nations spelling out how the money should be spent.

An eight-man technical team is due in Iraq on Thursday to determine Iraq's oil capacity.

In light of their report to Mr. Annan, the Security Council is due to decide what spare parts Iraq can purchase to upgrade its oil infrastructure to meet the new ceiling for oil sales.

Mr. Annan's talks with Mr. Sahhaf are expected to focus on the terms of a new distribution plan that Iraq is supposed to submit to the U.N. The new arrangements are to come into force when Mr. Annan has approved the new distribution plan.

During his discussions in Baghdad, Mr. Annan expressed frustration with the Iraqi position on the oil-for-food deal, according to sources close to the talks.

He notably told Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan that Iraq should "stop giving ammunition to the other guys" — referring to the United States.

Some U.N. officials suspect that Washington agreed to the higher oil-for-food ceiling knowing that Iraq did not have the technical capacity to pump so much oil, and would balk at other conditions.

Jordan, Israel sign standards unification agreement

(Continued from page 1)

eight existing Jordanian-Israeli joint businesses at the zone, more joint ventures will be approved.

Although trade exchanges fell short of expectations, Dr. Mulki indicated that it still represented a qualitative step in the trade relations between Jordan and Israel in 1997.

The volume of trade between both countries amounted to \$16 million in 1996.

"Over the last year, we have overcome several barriers and obstacles to trade between Jordan and Israel... The easing of procedures on the crossing points has also been a positive development which we should continue to reinforce," Dr. Mulki said.

The widening of the scope of tariff exemptions agreed upon over a year ago has been yet another factor in

increasing trade levels."

Last month Jordan and Israel gave conflicting figures on their volume of trade exchanges.

While Israel claimed that its 1997 imports from Jordan totalled \$12.5 million and its exports reached \$20 million, Anman maintained that last year's exports to the Jewish state amounted to \$22 million while its imports stood at \$9 million.

"While the figures are still too small, we have succeeded in removing a lot of non-tariff barriers... and hope to continue doubling our trade exchanges," said Mr. Sharansky.

Jordan and Israel also solved the problem concerning the seven-day guarantee deposits previously paid by the Jordanian trucks upon entry to Israel.

Trucks will now be able to pay the deposits on a daily

basis.

Both sides also agreed to appoint representatives on the borders to ensure a prompt clearing of goods without any delays.

According to Dr. Mulki, a Jordanian customs centre on the borders will commence operations in April to clear all Jordanian imports from and exports to Israel.

During Monday's meeting, Jordan also asked Israel to facilitate the flow of trade between Amman and the Palestinian self-rule areas — a market held captive to Israeli products.

Dr. Mulki said Israel promised to look into expanding the list of products exchanged between Jordan and the PNA.

"The list of products will be improved and is expected to be increased soon," said the min-

ister.

Jordan has been complaining of strict Israeli measures that impeded a smooth flow of trade between the Kingdom and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

Trade levels between Jordan and the PNA amounted to approximately \$31 million in 1996 — well below the aspired levels.

Dr. Mulki said a tripartite meeting grouping Jordan, Israel and the PNA is hoped to be held soon.

Mr. Sharansky dismissed reports that the commercial office at the Israeli Embassy in Amman was expected to close down. He said the office "aims at strengthening economic ties with Jordan instead of weakening them."

World powers agree on Belgrade weapons embargo over Kosovo

(Continued from page 1)

leaders, the group said in a statement.

This would mean a "substantially greater degree of autonomy" for Kosovo including "meaningful self-administration," it said.

Mr. Milosevic revoked Albania's previous autonomy in 1989 and has led the crackdown on Albanian-speakers who make up 90 per cent of the province's two million population.

At the meeting the U.S., which has pressed hardest for pressure on Mr. Milosevic, threatened to impose unilateral sanctions if the group did not take a tough stance, said a U.S. official who

asked not to be named.

Russia initially refused to support the package but later agreed to the arms bans as they affected all sides equally, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Nikolai Afanasyevski told reporters. Yugoslavia already has large supplies of military equipment while the Kosovo Albanians do not have large supplies of weapons.

Russia is ready to consider active approval for the other measures in two weeks or less if the situation does not improve, Mr. Afanasyevski said.

The U.S. official said that despite the lack of total agreement, the overall package was a "strong message, backed by eco-

nomics and other measures."

The measures were not, however, enough to meet the demands of Kosovo Albanians, around 3,000 of whom demonstrated outside Monday's meeting demanding full independence, full sanctions against Yugoslavia and armed intervention by U.N. forces.

British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, chairing the meeting, said military intervention had not been discussed and was "not on the agenda at the present time."

He added the crackdown by Serbia last week had been so severe it could not be considered as an "internal matter" and insisted "there must be no impunity for

those who break international law."

"The situation in Kosovo cannot be tolerated," he said.

Ms. Albright said: "We do not want a repeat of 1991" when nothing was done to stop the outbreak of war in Croatia. "The only kind of pressure Milosevic understands is that kind that imposes a real price on his unacceptable behaviour."

Mr. Primakov, French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine and German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel would all visit Belgrade in the next two weeks, Mr. Cook said. The Contact Group will meet again in Washington on March 25.

Insurance companies voice reservation on draft law

By Issam Qadmani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanian insurance companies voiced reservations on a draft insurance law during a one day meeting held here Monday.

Representatives of these companies demanded that some articles of the draft law be amended, especially

article 25. Most of the companies' directors who took part in the meeting said some parts of the draft law are bound to cause heavy losses for their companies while others said the law can cause a real crisis between their companies and the government.

The draft law was advocated by the government as a means to help mergers

between different companies.

Daoud Kurd, director general of Al Arab Insurance Company, criticised the draft law which, he said, calls for separation of different kinds of insurance that companies can sell.

He said: "If this principle is to be applied it would lead to the complete disappearance of many compa-

nies and would deal a heavy blow to the insurance sector."

Basel Hindawi, controller of insurance at the Ministry of Industry and Trade, said the current law on the insurance sector needs strengthening to ensure solvency and sound financial status.

While the current law and regulations contain some of

the principles which are important, they do not provide for effective control of the solvency of the insurance companies, which is the basic objective of financial supervision in the insurance sector. Dr. Hindawi added.

He said the new draft insurance law will be based on the European Union insurance law and will

ensure that companies maintain an adequate capital base from the risks.

The meeting which was under the patronage of minister of trade and industry, Hani Mulki, was attended by experts on insurance from the World Bank and the Republic of Ireland which had contributed to the drafting of the law.

Indonesian economy bleeds in IMF standoff

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesia and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Monday sought to mend fences after IMF unhappiness with the pace of government reforms caused it to delay a much-needed injection of money into the economy.

The delay in the disbursement of a \$3 billion IMF tranche threatened to stretch the country's foreign exchange reserves to the limit or beyond, analysts said.

Foreign Minister Ali Alatas attempted to calm the tensions with the fund, saying President Suharto was committed to the reforms and did not want any alteration in the IMF programme.

"We are going to implement the agreed programme on the reform and restructuring of our economy," Alatas told reporters on the sidelines of a session of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) which Tuesday will re-elect Suharto for a seventh five-year term of office.

The IMF also played down the growing confrontation with

Indonesia. The fund's country representative in Jakarta, Kadhim Al-Eyd, told Reuters a review team hoped soon to conclude talks with the government on the disbursement of \$3.0 billion from its more than \$40 billion financial bail-out package for the economically ravaged country.

Economic analysts said Indonesia's finances were in dire straits and the delay of the IMF instalment and of about \$2.5 billion from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank which were to accompany the tranche, would stretch foreign exchange reserves. News of the delay in the disbursement and comments by President Suharto and a government minister over the weekend criticising the IMF and its prescribed reform package spooked markets around the region.

"Let's be honest about it, it is actually very serious in Indonesia," Daim Zainuddin, economic adviser to the Malaysian government, told Reuters in Kuala Lumpur.

The rupiah plunged in early trade Monday and fell to as low as 12,250 to the dollar before clawing back to around 11,000 by the close after Bank Indonesia raised short-term interest rates of central bank papers.

The Jakarta stock market index closed down over 3.2 per cent at 495.81 points.

Singapore's Straits Times index closed down more than two per cent while Seoul stocks fell more than 3.4 per cent on woes linked to Indonesia.

"The IMF package will impose a liberal economy, which is not in line with article 33 (of the constitution)," Suharto told Yusuf Syakir, a leader of the minority United Development Party, Sunday.

But in a harder statement, State Minister of National Development Planning Ginandjar Kartasasmita warned that multilateral agencies such as the IMF should not degrade Indonesia, a newspaper reported Monday.

"We welcome international bodies such as the IMF and the World Bank to help Indonesia.

But if that means they can impose their will or humiliate us, we would be better off without their aid," Ginandjar, who said he was speaking as a ruling Golkar party official, was quoted by the Indonesian Observer as saying.

The IMF executive board had been due to decide on the second \$3.0 billion tranche by March 15, but the fund said Friday the board would be unable to meet before April. The money was intended for balance of payments support.

Because the delay was announced after weeks of complaints that Indonesia was dragging its feet on the reform programme, many took it as a sign of IMF ire.

"Indonesia is facing severe liquidity problems," said Thio Chin Loo, an analyst at Banque Paribas in Singapore. "The delay in IMF aid is surely adding to the already dire financial position."

"Unless a real commitment and action is taken by Indonesia to step up reform efforts, the outlook looks increasingly

bleak."

Other analysts said the demands on Indonesia's foreign exchange reserves were mounting because of its guarantee of all local bank liabilities and deposits and that reports of a \$2.2 billion short-dollar position at state-owned bank Ekspor Impor (EXIM) could just be the tip of the iceberg.

The analysts noted that Indonesia's gross foreign assets amounted to \$16.33 billion at the end of February, down from \$19.06 billion at the end of January.

Analysts, noting that only about \$10 billion of this was in usable foreign exchange reserves, said they were mystified at the reasons for the fall.

"Say they are using about \$1.0 billion per month on food. But the rest must be going to support the banking system and probably to cover forward liabilities," said one analyst.

"It's a severe balance of payments crunch. If EXIM is in any way reflective of forward swaps by local banks, the government is incredibly close to

being bankrupt," he said.

In Jakarta, however, interest remained focused on politics as the MPR, the nation's top policy-making body, continued a session that will return Suharto as president.

Suharto, the only candidate for the job, will be formally elected by the mostly hand-picked 1,000-member assembly Tuesday and sworn in Wednesday.

Within the MPR there has been no opposition to Suharto, an autocratic former army general who has ruled Indonesia for more than three decades, but protests have mounted across the nation blaming him and the government for the economic crisis.

Students held protest rallies inside university campuses in Jakarta and the nearby city of Bandung Monday and more demonstrations are likely over the next few days, student leaders said.

Police and troops were posted outside the gates of the campuses to ensure the protests did not spill over into the streets.

Ramallah

For local enquiries contact:
972 29987802/3
972 29987804 (FAX)

For enquiries in Jordan contact:
962 6 5607471
962 6 5692964 (FAX)

BritishBank

are pleased to announce that their Ramallah office is now open to provide international banking services in the Palestinian Autonomous Area including Global Automated Teller Machine Service.

BritishBank
Jaffa Street
P.O.Box: 2067
Ramallah
Palestinian Autonomous Area.

BritishBank
The British Bank of the Middle East
Member HSBC Group

A FURNISHED APARTMENT IN WESTERN SHMEISAN FOR RENT

Area: 220 sq.m., second floor apartment. Consisting of three bedrooms, two bathrooms, guest room, spacious living room, veranda, independent central heating, telephone, maid room, modern equipped kitchen and luxurious furniture.

Please call Tel.: 5665711 — Fax: 5664256

BritishBank opens branch in Ramallah

BRITISHBANK has announced the opening of a new branch in Ramallah in the Palestinian autonomous area. The bank will offer a comprehensive range of personal and corporate banking services fully supported by its parent company, the HSBC Group.

The branch opened for business on Feb. 8, 1998 following the receipt of approval from the Palestine Monetary Authority. It is conventionally located between the industrial and main downtown areas of Ramallah. Anton Lolas, branch manager, said, "BritishBank is now in a position to offer a wide range of modern banking services including personal banking products, such as MasterCard credit card and International ATM services to residents of the West Bank. It is the bank's goal to provide customers with the highest level of quality service and tailored products to meet their needs."

John Pascoe, chief executive officer, commented, "we are delighted to have the opportunity to contribute to the development and progress of Ramallah. The new branch illustrates BritishBank's ongoing commitment to serve our customers throughout the Middle East."

BritishBank is the largest and most widely represented international bank in the Middle East with 31 branches throughout the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Autonomous area and an offshore banking unit in Bahrain.

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

1 Hidden supply
6 Belge
10 Majority
14 Orderly arrangement
15 At that time
16 Woody Guthrie's boy
17 Shalimar
18 Shallow notch
19 Close at hand
20 Fuzzy brown tropical fruit
21 Graduation garb
23 Transmitter
25 Film reel
26 Kingly
28 Rock-boring tool
32 Flying saucer, for short
34 Nebraska city
37 Ascend
38 Poetic meadows
40 Wounded by a wasp
42 Mismatch dish
43 Makes a home
45 French painter
47 Head cover
48 Fasten
50 Terra firma
52 Alcove
55 Most recent
58 Deceased
62 Tickle Me
63 "M*A*S*H" star
64 Spotted
65 Transmit payment
66 Borodin opera, "Prince"
67 Set up for a drive
68 Dancing Fred's sister
69 Classified fat
70 Fast planes, for short
71 Senator Kefauver

4 Halogen compound
5 Look up and down
6 Sicilian volcano
7 Polter tokens
8 Story so far, briefly
9 Loosen one's tie
10 Mutators
11 Popular cookie
12 Cabbage dish
13 Ripped
21 Studies late
22 Mrs.
24 Self conceit
27 Thin strip of wood
29 Tropical hat
30 On the briny
31 Gingrich, lo friends
32 Arm bone
33 Leg ends
35 Shred
36 Banquet or Boleyn
39 Benchmark

41 \$1,000
44 Flat-bottomed boat
46 Anger
49 Lifting devices
51 Nubby woolens
53 Leg joints
54 Shooting at clay targets
56 Grin
57 Carries
58 Flag down
59 Gymnast
60 Starch
61 Concludes
65 Sally Field film, "Norma"

Peanuts

I SEE WOODSTOCK IS DOING REPAIR WORK ON HIS NEST AGAIN.

Andy Capp

LOOK, JUST GET YOURSELF TO BED, EH?

NO ONE REALLY GETS YOURSELF TO BED, EH?

Mutt'n' Jeff

ON MY GOSH! JEFF WAS IN AN AUTO ACCIDENT! I HOPE HE'S O.K.

YES, MY PAL, TELL ME, DOO, HOW IS HE?

NO RESPONSE! IN SORRY THAT'S IT!

OH, NO! MY PAL! ITS LUCKY I HAD HIS INSURANCE FOR \$1000!

YOU'RE NOT? BUT THE DOG SAID YOU ARE!

LIE DOWN! DO YOU WANT TO MAKE A LAM OUT OF THE DOCTOR?

IT TELL YOU I'M NOT!

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) A lunch date could lead to romance. If you're not in a relationship, get close to someone you'd like to start one with. It's a good afternoon to begin a group project. Try a bigger challenge than ever before. You need something like that to keep you interested.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Make your major decisions as early as possible. Don't procrastinate. Later in the focus shifts to financial matters. It may seem like there's not enough money to do what you want. Remember that old line about necessity being the mother of invention? Necessity in pushing you to try new things. One of them is bound to work.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) If your work's done, you might be able to travel this weekend. How about skiing at Tahoe, or perhaps the Swiss Alps? This won't happen if you've been goofing off. Put in the correction, and next time this condition comes around, it's off to the Alps for you. Meanwhile, back to work.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) A friend can help you solve a difficult problem this morning. Talk it over with one who's more predictable than you are. This person had had the same lifestyle for longer than you can remember. Your problem is that things in your life are changing. If you need a little stability, go to one who has a lot of it.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Complete a project this morning. You'll make a good impression on an older person and increase the money coming in. This afternoon, you'll have more chance to socialize. That's also your best opportunity for romance. In fact, it may find you. It looks like your partner is in an aggressive mood. This could be interesting.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Ask for what you want early this morning. Later, everything gets confusing. Your boss or teacher or parent will order you to do one thing, then expect you to have something else done at the same time. Don't let you get frazzled too. Instead, help this person get organized. That will make both of your lives a lot easier.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) The morning starts out slow, but the days gets better. By afternoon, you should be doing pretty well. You'll be able to find just the right words, especially with loved ones and children. You'll also be firm and decisive, so watch what you say. You'll have to keep any agreements you make this evening.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You could get a good opportunity this afternoon. If you have your budget figured out, you'll know how much you can afford to spend. Money is not necessarily tight, but it never hurts to spend it wisely. The time you spend planning earlier in this day will show up as money saved later.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Things will fall together this morning, and money might even fall into your pocket. It's not from winning the lottery. It's from work you've done recently. Celebrate at lunch with your favourite person. Choose a date who can teach you something. It looks like love and learning are linked right now. This could turn to be something a bit more personal. It's up to you.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Your life should start moving faster around the middle of the day. It might seem like you have too much to do, but that's never stopped you before. You're probably finding it exciting. Don't forget to get the clients to sign on the dotted line. If you forget something today, the mistake could be an expensive one.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) A problem you've been struggling with starts to ease around the middle of the day. The solution either becomes obvious, or you simply stop caring. Your interest shifts to romance tonight, and it's about time. You've done without it for long enough. Set up a dinner date. You and your sweetheart have a lot to talk about.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Spend the morning studying, so you can handle a difficult situation this afternoon. It's not as hard as it is confusing. You want to ask everyone else's opinion, but you need to make sure your own interests are protected. You tend to do what everybody else wants. That's admirable, but not really necessary.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper.

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

REELD
SERCS
FREPER
LEXFAN

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: _____

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: ABHOR GLOAT STUCCO SHERRY
Answer: Easy for a reporter to get at a doughnut shop — THE "HOLE" STORY

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Halaqah gives low marks to food industry

ACCORDING TO Secretary-General of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, Mohammad Halaqah, the weak competitiveness of Jordan's food industry is attributable to the absence of clear and specific strategies, weak administrative and marketing skills and also weak research and development activities. He said, during a seminar organised by Dajani Consultancy Company, the food industry is capable of competing price-wise but in terms of quality, the sector has to adopt the necessary international standards such as ISO and HACCP, a system to analyse the risks in food industries. Dr. Halaqah described the food industry as a modest sector in terms of its contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP) as it does not exceed two per cent, whereas the share of "industry" and convertible industries in the GDP stands at 19.7 per cent and 13.4 per cent respectively. He pointed out that industrial exports represent 86 per cent of total exports, noting that 62 per cent of industrial exports are products of convertible industries and 9.9 per cent are products of food industries. In addition, Dr. Halaqah indicated, the food industries employ 12.6 per cent of the total industrial labour. Dr. Halaqah called for concentrating on convertible industries, especially those of medium and small-size plants. He concluded by mentioning that five Jordanian companies are on their way towards adopting the HACCP system in the country.

Jordanian bankers, financial experts see no cause for concern regarding Palestinian currency

COMMENTING ON reports that the Palestinian National Authority intends to issue Palestinian currency and that the governor of the monetary authority has announced that studies and research have started in this regard, Jordanian financial experts and bankers stressed that such a step would not affect Jordanian reserves due to the low volume of currency in circulation in Palestinian areas. The experts and bankers indicated that a decision to issue currency is considered as a political move before it can be considered economic. They noted that the present stage lacks much of the components that help in issuing a Palestinian currency. According to sources at the Central Bank of Jordan, eight Jordanian banks having 49 branches operate in the Palestinian territories. Total deposits at these banks amounted to JD1.23 billion in Jordanian dinars and other currencies at the end of November 1997. Credits extended totalled JD284.3 million. Based on these statistics, the bankers and financial experts indicated that since half of the Palestinian banking system belongs to Jordanian banks and capital, it is highly important that both Jordanians and Palestinians should maintain close coordination to handle any financial or monetary developments.

Oil price falls below \$13 a barrel on OPEC discord

LONDON (AFP) — The benchmark Brent crude oil price fell sharply Monday amid discord in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) over how to shore up prices. Brent for delivery in April fell below \$13 a barrel late in the day to \$12.97, its lowest level since March 28, 1994 — compared with \$13.45 at the Monday opening and \$13.60 at the Friday close. The plunge came in reaction to a report in the Middle East Economic Survey (MEES) that the chances of an extraordinary OPEC meeting to consider production cuts had "fallen virtually to zero." An oil analyst at Salomon Smith Barney trading house, Peter Gignoux, said: "There is not going to be a meeting, I am positive." OPEC Secretary General Rikman Lukman called Wednesday for a special session on prices to be held on March 16 in Vienna. He wanted the meeting to be held during a session of the ministerial-level market surveillance committee which groups the secretary general, Iran, Nigeria, and Kuwait. But the MEES newsletter noted that the appeal by the group's Indonesian presidency had failed to raise a favourable response except among the three surveillance committee member countries. It said the other group members "declined the invitation or did not respond."

Venezuela, which produces almost a million barrels per day (bpd) over its quota, has said it feels "no urgency" over holding a session considering production cuts. If the March 16 ministerial gathering does not take place, the next regular scheduled OPEC ministerial conference is not until June. Oil prices have fallen sharply since December, when OPEC decided to raise its 1998 production ceiling to 27.5 million barrels per day from its previous 25 million bpd ceiling. Reduced demand from Asia as economic turmoil there bites has accelerated the price fall. Prices have tumbled in the face of increased OPEC output and higher Iraqi production, coupled with low demand due to a warm northern hemisphere winter. "The downturn is intact and the market will be under pressure in the next few weeks, you can be sure," Mr. Gignoux said. OPEC members have been in dispute as prices fall. Saudi Arabia, by far the biggest oil producer, wants to bring fellow member Venezuela into line and to respect output ceilings. Saudi Arabia, which initiated the quota hike, insists that it will not cut unilaterally its output, but Venezuela, OPEC's biggest

over-quota producer in January at 917,000 bpd, has snubbed calls to attend the latest special meeting. While not responding directly to secretary general's invitation, Saudi Arabia said it would participate in joint production cuts if "significant" steps were taken by over-quota producers. Leo Drollas at the Centre of Global Energy Studies said that feuding between Saudi Arabia and Venezuela was a "childish game." "In the fight for market share, Venezuela cannot compete with the Saudis," the oil analyst said, adding that "it is a game with no real winner but losers all round."

Personal computer market unsettled by Asia

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Back to back warnings this week of lower earnings from two of the world's largest tech firms, Intel and Motorola, point to a difficult year for the sector as the effect of the Asian contraction begins to be felt. "We have a major problem right now in the industry because of low inventories, low prices and the situation in Asia," Mona Ebrahima, an analyst with the investment firm Gruntal, said in a CNBC Television

interview. Added Edward La Varnway of the commercial bank First Albany: "It'll probably be the case that there will be more of this — and technology stocks will clearly take a major hit." Intel, the world's largest computer chip manufacturer, revealed Wednesday that first quarter sales would be 10 per cent below fourth quarter 1997 results, largely in response to weaker demand from computer makers. Motorola followed suit,

announcing that currency depreciations in Asia would mean earnings well below levels predicted by market analysts. The communications and semiconductor giant was expected to be hurt both by lower Asian sales and competition at home from cheaper Asian imports. Intel and Motorola serve different markets, the former geared exclusively to computer makers while the latter turns out telephones, satellite equipment and electronic chips for the

automobile industry. Mr. La Varnway noted that "semiconductors, software and telecommunications equipment seem to have the most exposure in Asia, alongside metals and chemicals." While the Asian crisis may pose obstacles to earnings growth, they will not be permanent. "The worst is going to be over in the first quarter," said Ms. Mona Ebrahima. Mr. La Varnway offered a more cautious assessment for high-tech prospects in

Asia. "It's still not clear when they will recover, but (Asia) has a young and educated population and that's a very good sign for the longer term," he said. By contrast the impact of cheap personal computers on the industry is likely to linger. Companies and consumers alike are rushing to buy personal computers at prices less than \$1,000. Introduced on the U.S. market a year ago, these machines now represent 35 per cent of the market. "That trend will continue," Mr. Lane predicted. "You don't need a race car to go to the supermarket." Users of inexpensive personal computers can happily edit texts, access the Internet and send and receive e-mail and have no need of the latest technology. As a result, while U.S. retail computer sales jumped 54 per cent in January over a year earlier, they increased only 10 per cent in dollar terms.

Egypt, Tunisia setting up free trade zone

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt and Tunisia have signed an agreement creating a free trade zone and calling for the total liberalisation of bilateral trade by 2007. Egyptian Prime Minister Kamal Al Ganzouri and Tunisian counterpart Hamed Karoui signed the agreement providing for the total and immediate liberalisation of 58 Egyptian goods and 42 Tunisian items, the government newspaper Al Ahram reported. "Customs duties on other items will be reduced by 20 per cent annually until bilateral trade is completely liberalised in the year 2007," Dr. Ganzouri said. He said the agreement "will form the core of an Arab free trade zone." The two countries are trying to raise the value of bilateral trade to \$300 million by 2000, or five times its current level.

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	FRF	ITL	ESP	GRD
US Dollar	1.0000	1.6366	0.6561	0.6561	106.48	6.5596	1.3667	166.37	340.75
DE Mark	0.6078	1.0000	0.4366	0.4366	16.6371	3.3757	0.7363	9.3653	19.36
GB Sterling	1.5478	2.4327	1.0000	0.7558	160.338	16.6371	3.3757	20.48	42.48
CH Franc	0.6078	0.4366	0.7558	1.0000	166.371	3.3757	0.7363	9.3653	19.36
JP Yen	0.0094	0.0601	0.0062	0.0062	1.0000	16.6371	3.3757	20.48	42.48
FR Franc	0.0155	0.1036	0.0116	0.0116	0.0060	1.0000	16.6371	3.3757	20.48
IT Lira	0.0008	0.0054	0.0004	0.0004	0.0003	0.0002	1.0000	16.6371	3.3757
NL Guilder	0.0036	0.0236	0.0027	0.0027	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	1.0000	16.6371
GR Drac	0.0027	0.0175	0.0020	0.0020	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	1.0000	16.6371

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	FRF	ITL	ESP	GRD
US Dollar	1.0000	1.6366	0.6561	0.6561	106.48	6.5596	1.3667	166.37	340.75
Jordan Dinar	0.7090	1.1538	0.4608	0.4608	75.120	7.5996	1.5667	196.37	400.75
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.4327	0.1666	0.1666	26.6371	2.6375	0.6363	7.9653	16.36
Bahraini Dinar	0.2866	0.4627	0.1766	0.1766	28.6371	2.8375	0.6663	8.3653	17.36
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.4501	0.1701	0.1701	27.470	2.7475	0.6501	8.1653	16.86
Kuwait Dinar	0.2728	0.4481	0.1691	0.1691	27.280	2.7275	0.6481	8.1453	16.81
Lebanese Dinar	0.2723	0.4476	0.1686	0.1686	27.230	2.7225	0.6476	8.1353	16.76
Emirati Dirham	0.2866	0.4627	0.1766	0.1766	28.660	2.8675	0.6667	8.3653	17.36
Egyptian Pound	0.2500	0.4091	0.1591	0.1591	25.000	2.5000	0.6250	7.8125	16.25

Mid-East Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	FRF	ITL	ESP	GRD
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4327	0.1666	0.1666	26.6371	2.6375	0.6363	7.9653	16.36
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.4476	0.1686	0.1686	27.230	2.7225	0.6476	8.1353	16.76
KW Dinar	0.2728	0.4481	0.1691	0.1691	27.280	2.7275	0.6481	8.1453	16.81
BH Dinar	0.2728	0.4481	0.1691	0.1691	27.280	2.7275	0.6481	8.1453	16.81
CY Pound	0.2866	0.4627	0.1766	0.1766	28.660	2.8675	0.6667	8.3653	17.36

JOD Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	FRF	ITL	ESP	GRD
US Dollar	1.0000	1.6366	0.6561	0.6561	106.48	6.5596	1.3667	166.37	340.75
GB Sterling	0.6078	0.4366	1.0000	0.7558	160.338	16.6371	3.3757	20.48	42.48
DE Mark	0.6078	1.0000	0.4366	0.4366	16.6371	3.3757	0.7363	9.3653	19.36
CH Franc	0.6078	0.4366	0.7558	1.0000	166.371	3.3757	0.7363	9.3653	19.36
JP Yen	0.0094	0.0601	0.0062	0.0062	1.0000	16.6371	3.3757	20.48	42.48
FR Franc	0.0155	0.1036	0.0116	0.0116	0.0060	1.0000	16.6371	3.3757	20.48
IT Lira	0.0008	0.0054	0.0004	0.0004	0.0003	0.0002	1.0000	16.6371	3.3757
NL Guilder	0.0036	0.0236	0.0027	0.0027	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	1.0000	16.6371

Small Equity Indices									
Index	Value	Change	% Chg	High	Low	Open	Close	Prev	Vol
New York DOW JONES	8597.53	28.14	0.33	8603.78	8541.48	8589.39	8597.53	8589.39	1000000
New York S&P 500	1066.57	0.88	0.08	1067.11	1050.02	1065.83	1066.57	1065.83	1000000
London FT-SE 100	5814.0	31.8	0.55	5826.8	5764.8	5802.9	5814.0	5802.9	1000000
Tokyo NIKKEI 225	16972.83	189.44	1.12	17032.4	16772.5	17132	16972.83	17132	1000000
Paris CAC 40	3825.85	42.53	1.12	3831.27	3747.79	3833.22	3825.85	3833.22	1000000
Frankfurt DAX	4780.83	64.88	1.38	4806.38	4751.1	4715.95	4780.83	4715.95	1000000

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET										
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHREISANI										
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179										
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 09/03/1998										
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / B	DIV.	NO. OF TRANSA.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
346.000	250.000	ARAB BANK	15.7	1.17	6	160	54420	339.00	340.50	1.50+
S 3.540	1.310	BANK OF JORDAN	4.3	0.00	1	300	135	1.25	1.35	-
S 2.680	1.650	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	10.3	6.11	16	10100	17278	1.72	1.71	-01-
S 5.300	4.610	THE HOUSING BK.	29.9	1.94	4	3100	15500	5.00	5.00	-
S 4.180	1.820	JOR. EDUWAT BANK	10.1	0.00	12	8789	10693	1.82	1.89	+07+
S 920	620	JOR. CULP. BANK	4.2	9.86	2	500	353	69	71	+02+
S 4.020	1.990	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	10.4	4.71	17	6899	14082	2.04	2.04	-
N 2.350	1.610	JOR. INV. F.M. BANK/NEW	8	0.00	2	2000	3420	1.72	1.71	-01-
1.500	800	BEIT AL-HAL (BEITRA)	6	15.75	25	11450	10811	90	95	+05+
BANK SECTOR TOTALS										
INDEX: 236.96 %CHG: +0.39										
S 1.420	0.900	ARABIAN SEAS INSUR.	10.0	0.00	1	800	880	1.05	1.10	+05+
2.400	1.590	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	6.5	10.73	10	3150	7413	2.35	2.33	-02-
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS										
INDEX: 123.42 %CHG: +0.12										
2.140	1.550	JOR. ELECTRICITY PWR.	10.0	4.81	16	10650	22195	2.10	2.08	-02-
4.030	1.320	IRBID ELECTRICITY	13.4	5.11	1	300	900	2.25	2.25	-
4.620	2.450	MIDWEST MINERALS	53.2	0.00	6	1605	7677	4.62	4.63	+23+
1.550	0.930	NATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	29	115100	130927	1.14	1.12	-02-
610	370	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	20.0	0.00	7	2700	1056	41	39	-02-
9.270	6.700	ALRAI	9.5	6.42	2	200	1865	9.27	9.35	+08+
1.480	1.150	MID. EAST HOTELS	17.8	0.00	1	250	293	1.20	1.17	-03-
4.800	2.890	JOR. INV. F.M. EDUC.	11.1	1.79	1	250	1118	4.50	4.47	-03-
1.090	900	ZAKA EDUCATION	9	0.00	5	2330	2236	96	96	-
1.830	1.630	UNITED CO.	7.7	6.32	2	750	1300	1.75	1.74	-01-
810	600	UNION LAND DEV.	9	0.00	2	1050	715	69	68	-01-
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS										
INDEX: 121.90 %CHG: -0.42										
4.450	2.690	JOR. CHEMIST FACT.	39.8	3.74	31	15151	44971	3.00	2.94	-06-
4.140	3.050	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	9.3	2.99	1	150	503	3.25	3.35	-
7.050	5.020	ARAB PORTFOLIO	15.1	3.09	1	1550	9610	6.25	6.20	-03-
11.160	9.200	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.5	8.22	8	1430	15421	10.80	10.82	+02+
2.610	1.240	INDUSTRIAL COMM. MGR.	9	0.00	8	2700	1056	41	39	-01-
S 7.700	3.440	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	14.8	3.72	95	32150	173215	5.50	5.37	+13+
6.350	4.400	DAR ALADAMA DV. INV.	15.3	4.01	9	10400	64960	6.29	6.24	-03-
3.460	2.220	ARAB ALUM. IND.	7.0	0.00	9	2500	7382	2.94	2.97	+05+
610	400	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	10.6	0.00	65	15050	76068	53	52	-03-
1.140	660	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	9	0.00	1	500	345	70	69	-01-
680	510	NATIONAL ALUM.	9	0.00	2	1750	980	58	56	-02-
1.030	370	UPPERED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	24	28150	8914	46	45	-01-
760	500	JOR. ROCKWELL INDS.	9	0.00	2	1100	618	58	58	-
2.320	1.380	UNIV. CHEM. INDS.	14.0	6.45	1	500	775	1.58	1.55	-03-
S 3.000	920	NATL. CABLE WIRE MFAC	28.2	0.00	22	14000	10886	1.19	1.17	-02-
7.790	530	JOR. SULPHUR INDS.	9.0	0.00	26	14800	15800	1.20	1.27	+01-
1.560	1.150	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	17.9	5.00	23	9050	14730	1.44	1.40	-04-
+ 1.120	880	KAMTHAR INVEST.	53.2	0.00	1	280	135	1.56	1.54	-02-
S 1.700	1.000	JOR. WOOD. IND.	6.0	0.00	7	6000	6105	1.05	1.04	-01-
1.410	690	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	10.8	12.50	40	37450	30257	8.2	8.0	-02-
1.620	1.350	NATL. GLASS	4.0	0.01	5	2700	6129	1.53	1.52	-01-
1.080	810	JOR. NEW ALUM. CO.	14.0	0.00	50	42400	42680	1.05	1.04	-01-
1.880	1.290	EL-SAY REPAIR WEAR	50.0	6.61	5	2300	3268	1.46	1.42	-04-
1.250	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.6	0.00	12	6400	7680	1.22	1.20	-02-
880	660	JORDAN STEEL	37.1	6.10	15	46015	46015	82	82	-
1.840	870	MTO EAST COMPLEX	19.0	15.63	18	24500	15788	85	84	-01-
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS										
INDEX: 115.66 %CHG: -0.93										
GRAND TOTAL										
INDEX: 171.57 %CHG: -0.12										
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 09/03/1998										
N 1.080	960	EXPORT & F.M. BKK. 75%	17.8	0.00	1	2000	14020	96	96	-
1.530	340	JOR. TRADE FAC.	10.7	0.00	7	10450	4078	40	40	-
480	460	NATL. COMMER. CENTERS	8	0.00	4	1250	170	70	70	-
800	660	UNION INV. 501	9	0.00	5	14500	3480	74	74	-
1.620	360	ARAB FIB. INVEST.	9	0.00	29	65800	29610	47	45	-02-
N 1.000	740	AL-KHARJ INV. CO.	4.0	0.00	4	4000	23600	74	74	-01-
1.000	850	JOR. INV. CO.	17.0	5.00	2	14750	14750	1.00	1.00	-
1.640	370	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	22	41750	21293	49	51	+02+
240	270	JOR. INV. F.M. CO.	39.2	0.00	82	9470	32670	27	27	-02-
450	280	NATL. TEXTILE	9	0.00	2	7500	278	39	39	-02-
780	380	NATL. MOLT. SNG. HAMCO	30	0.00	35	48727	19003	29	39	-02-
400	520	AL-KHARJ INV. CO.	4.0	0.00	2	4000	23600	74	74	-01-
690	580	MIDWEST PEARL 90%	9	0.00	7	5250	2953	68	67	-02-
1.500	860	UNION TOBACCO 75%	9	0.00	2	5800	959	1.38	1.28	-02-
240	460	AL-KHARJ INV. CO.	4.0	0.00	10	9150	2578	72	72	-02-
N 950	550	ADVANCED PEARLMA. IND.	9	0.00	9	13830	8999	66	65	-01-
670	370	PEARL SNG. P. CONV.	8	0.00	2	3419	895	37	37	-
490	740	NATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	3	3000	1136	74	74	-01-
N 1.000	470	OPTICALS HEARING 75%	8	0.00	5	3000	1080	62	61	-01-
N 1.000	660	NAT. ALUMINUM 75%	94.6	0.00	19	22100	9568	69	68	-01-
1.000	750	AL-KHARJ INV. CO.	4.0	0.00	1	2000	1000	1.00	1.01	+01+
N 1.000	750	EXERAL PRINT CO. 75%	8	0.00	13	41000	26473	88	91	+03+
GRAND TOTAL										
236 420463 206355										

Sizzling Agassi wins second straight title

SCOTTSDALE, Arizona (AFP) — Andre Agassi won his second tournament in a row Sunday, defeating Australian Jason Stoltenberg 6-4, 7-6 (7/3) in the ATP Tour event here.

The victory gives the 27-year-old World No. 50 a 16-2 win-loss mark in 1998.

His 16 wins are one better than the 15 of Australian Open champion Petr Korda. Greg Rusedski, Marcelo Rios and Karol Kucera and prove that the Agassi comeback effort is gaining serious momentum.

Agassi added his third Scottsdale crown, a cheque for \$45,000 and 150 computer ranking points to the title he took in San Jose, California, last month over Pete Sampras.

The former World No. 1 will move into the 30s on the ATP Tour rankings and stands in good shape for his next event, the Champions Cup starting Monday in Indian Wells, California.

The victory was Agassi's 36th career title, putting him fourth on the list of active players.

Stoltenberg was playing in his second final of the year after losing in Adelaide last January in the trophy match.

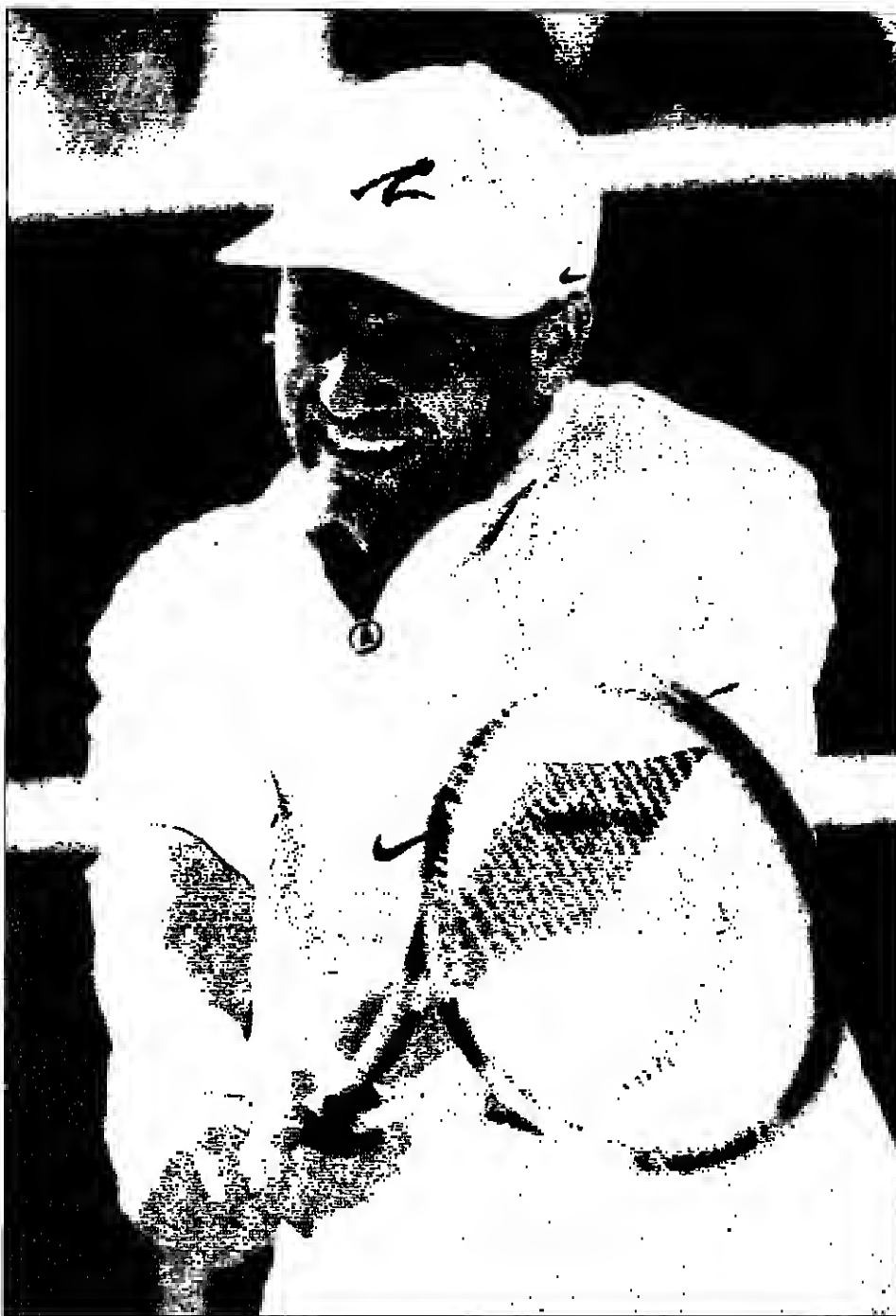
The world No. 47 has surprised himself with his fast start this year after sitting out the last four months of 1997 to let a knee injury heal.

Agassi, continuing the hot pace he has set all week, struck first in the match, breaking the Australian for 2-1 when Stoltenberg netted a forehand.

The Australian came through a game featuring five deuces totalling 18 points to hold for 2-3 under sunny conditions with none of the wind which had bothered competitors for the past two days.

Stoltenberg fought to break back in the sixth game, levelling the set at three apiece.

Agassi didn't hesitate to regain his edge with a break for 4-3, and moved out to 5-3 with a love game. Agassi claimed the set on the first of two



Andre Agassi

sets Agassi produced a love game for 5-4 and notched his first ace of the day to bring on a tiebreaker. The American reached three match points and needed only one.

"It's no miracle cure, just a lot of hard work," Agassi said of a post-Australian Open win streak which has stretched to 10 matches. "I'm out there getting better and playing well."

"Today was an outstanding match all the way around. We both played well. We broke other back and forth in both sets and

that shows the level of intensity that we had — no one was willing to give it up."

Agassi saved seven of nine break points in the one hour, 36-minute match. "We both played well. It was as good of a two-set match as you'll ever see. It was hard tennis."

Agassi hopes to go from strength to strength.

"This win continues my confidence in my game. I'm better now than in San Jose. Outdoor hardcourt is my surface. I believe I can win on it."

Stoltenberg had a good

day despite the loss.

"I was trying to come to the net as best I could, it's tough against him. You've got to take some chances. I did that reasonably well. Overall I stuck to my game plan pretty well."

"I've played pretty well this year. I've been training hard and my preparation was quite good."

"I thought at the start of the week that if I played well I'd have a chance to make it through to the final. But I was taking it one match at a time."

George set for another world record attempt

ADELAIDE (AFP) — Plans were underway Monday to schedule another athletics meeting here late this month to give Australian Emma George a chance to reclaim the world indoor pole vault record.

George cleared 4.47 metres here last Saturday, improving on the 4.46m set by Czech Daniela Bartova in Berlin 24 hours earlier.

But on Sunday, Bartova and American Stacy Dragila both broke George's record by clearing 4.48m in a meeting at Sindelfingen, Germany.

George's manager Rob Aivatoglou said Monday there were moves for an indoor meeting here on March 26, which would give the former circus acrobat an opportunity to recapture the world record, broken three times in the past three days.

Aivatoglou said George was disappointed she had been unable to hold on to the record, after failing at her attempt here on Saturday to clear 4.52m.

"But I think it's terrific for the credibility of the sport, the fact that there's a number of girls who are all extremely competitive," he said.

"She is always disappointed to lose the record, but she will have another go at it."

Japan and S. Korea looking for World Cup revamp

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan and South Korea are both looking to boost their World Cup squads after struggling in the Dynasty Cup tournament.

Doubts have been raised about the future of South Korean coach Cha Bum-kun and players from both squads may be axed between now and the World Cup finals in France in June.

South Korea lost to Japan in the first match of the tournament and needed a last minute goal to beat Hong Kong in their final match. Japan won the Dynasty Cup but were beaten 2-0 by China.

Changes are expected before Japan and South Korea clash again on April 1 in a match to commemorate their joint hosting of the 2002 World Cup finals.

After his side lost 2-1 to Japan in Yokohama, South Korean coach Cha hinted that he was ready to stand down if necessary.

"I am willing to turn over the helm anytime to whoever can bring the first victory to our team in the World Cup finals," he commented.

"But as long as I have the reins, I will do my utmost."

The Korean Football Association has said Cha will stay in the post. "We've never considered replacing him," said senior KFA official Cho Joong-Yon. But Cha will be summoned to meetings this week about the squad.

South Korea are looking to win a match for the first time in what will be their fifth World Cup finals. The prospect of arch-rivals Japan getting ahead worries them even more.

But Japan have their own worries after their comprehensive defeat by China last Saturday.

"Japan is physically inferior even in Asia. But there's nothing we can do about it," said Japanese head coach Takeshi Okada of the defeat.

Okada tried more defensive tactics against the big Chinese team for the match — with midfielders Hiroshi Nanami, Motohiro Yamaguchi and Toshihiro Hattori pulled back.

In three months, Japan will find it even

tougher in their Group H matches against Argentina, Croatia and Jamaica.

"Now I realise how hard it is to attack a team with strong physical abilities," said Okada after suffering his first defeat in his ninth match in charge.

"We need to be more ingenious," he said. "I am still too excited to think with a cool head. I will go home and think it over and watch the video replays."

Okada, who had never managed a team, took over as head coach from Shu Kamo last October and successfully turned around Japan's fortunes in their World Cup qualifying campaign.

China's coach Bobby Houghton said Japan and South Korea had "some very talented players who show good movement and skill."

"But my fear would be they will find it very difficult physically in France," said the Englishman.

"When balls come into the penalty area there's no one making the decision to come and clear it. I wonder if Japan is going to be physically tough enough."

Ken Naganuma, head of the Japanese Football Association, said the team had been "too defensively." The JFA also plans special World Cup planning meetings this week.

Junji Ogura, the secretary general of the association, said Japan would like to play China again — possibly in late April when there is a little break in the tight J-League schedule.

Japan will also play two more international A matches in the Kirin Cup tournament here but the participating teams have not yet been announced.

Newcastle end 10-man Barnsley's Wembley dream

LONDON (AFP) — Newcastle United stayed on course for their first trophy since winning the 1969 FA Cup beating 10-man Barnsley 3-1 on Sunday in their FA Cup quarter-final — earlier West Ham had drawn 1-1 with Arsenal.

Newcastle, who will play either Sheffield United or Coventry in the semi-finals, took a two goal lead in the first-half through Georgian Temur Ketsbaia and Gary Speed and although Andy Liddell reduced the deficit in the 57th minute, England midfielder David Batty scored Newcastle's third in injury time.

Barnsley, who had knocked out Bolton, Spurs and Manchester United on their way to the quarter-finals, had any chance of overcoming Newcastle extinguished when their England Under-21 international defender Adrian Moses was sent off midway through the second-half for a second bookable offence.

In the other quarter-final West Ham defender Ian Pearce went from hero to villain as Arsenal fought back to draw 1-1 in their FA Cup quarter-final — the end of the match was marked by a fight between Arsenal's French midfielder Patrick Vieira and the Hammers' John Moncur.

Vieira had to be pulled away from the Scottish midfielder after he laid into him just as the final whistle was blown. Pearce, signed from Blackburn Rovers last summer, scored his first goal for the club in the 12th



Newcastle United striker Alan Shearer holds back Barnsley defender Arjan De Zeeuw (R) in the FA Cup sixth round match at St James Park Newcastle March 8. Newcastle won the match 3-1 (Reuters photo).

minute but 14 minutes later he conceded a penalty after tripping Martin Keown, which Dutchman Dennis Bergkamp converted for his 18th goal of the season.

West Ham, who beat Arsenal to win the last of their three Cup final wins back in 1980, went ahead when Pearce shot home a low left footed effort from 14 yards which beat the despairing dive of Austrian 'keeper Alex Manninger.

However, the 23-year-old Pearce then allowed Arsenal back into the match when he failed to clear the ball and upended Keown. Bergkamp coolly slotted the ball home, his third goal in the Cup this season, despite the Hammers' French keeper Bernard Lama going the right way.

The winner of the replay in 10 days time will play first division Wolverhampton Wanderers in the April 5 semi-final — Wolves beat Premiership side Leeds United 1-0 on Saturday.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Siemerink claims 3rd title

ROTTERDAM (AFP) — Dutchman Jan Siemerink won his third ATP tour title here on Sunday beating Thomas Johansson of Sweden 7-6 (7/2), 6-2. The 27-year-old left-hander, who knocked out top seed Pat Rafter of Australia in the quarter-finals, broke Johansson in the third and seventh games of the second set to add the title to his previous wins in Nottingham in 1996 and Singapore in 1991 — he has lost in nine other finals. The 48th ranked Dutchman, who had eliminated compatriot and previous titleholder Richard Krajicek in the semi-finals, wasted several chances to break the 22-year-old Swede, ranked 34th in the world, in the first set but easily prevailed in the tiebreak.

Referee sends himself off

LONDON (AFP) — Football referee Melvin Sylvester sent himself off after losing his temper and attacking a player who had jostled him. The Daily Telegraph reported Monday, Sylvester, 42, was refereeing an amateur game at Charlton, southern England, when he punched the 27-year-old player several times, giving him a black eye and obliging him to leave the field for treatment. After other players intervened to calm the referee down Sylvester pulled out his red card and sent himself for an early bath, handing the game over to a substitute. He has now said he will never run a football match again. "I was sorely provoked," he said. "I just could not take any more — I blew my top."

FURNISHED APARTMENT FOR RENT

— 3 bedrooms
— Guest room and dining room
— Satellite and Telephone
Location: Um Utheina, in front of Bulgarian embassy
For more information please call
Tel.: 5535528/29, 5531341

FOR RENT

Furnished Apartment in Shmelsani
Very good location, in a building with only 3 apartments, overlooking a garden. Consists of 2 bedrooms, living room, dining room, new modern furniture, well-equipped kitchen, 2 bathrooms, separate central heating, separate entrance, telephone, TV and video.
Please call Tel.: 5606947 or Fax: 5686539

EXCELLENT APARTMENT & STUDIO FOR RENT

I) 240-sq.m.-first floor surrounded by balconies, overlooking private gardens. Consists of large furnished salon equipped with (video, TV and telephone), dining room, separate two bedrooms with a bath, fully equipped large kitchen with fridge, deep freezer and oven.
Guest's bathroom and laundry room.
II) Nicely furnished studio, independent with large first floor roof and beautiful view. Consist of sitting area equipped with (TV & telephone), bed corner and choice dining corner, equipped kitchenette with fridge, bath with continuously running hot water.
The apartment is of only two floors family building located in the best residential area in Amman with multi-car parks existing, Zahran St. 147.
If interested please call 5932509

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TAMMAM HUSSEIN

SEND A MESSAGE

Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ A 5 3 2
♥ V 10 9
♦ A 10 9
♣ K Q 7 5 2

WEST
♠ 10 6
♥ Q 8 6 5
♦ K 3 2
♣ A J 8

EAST
♠ K Q J 2 7
♥ 10 4 3 2
♦ 8 5 4
♣ 4 4

SOUTH
♠ 8 4
♥ A K J 7
♦ Q J 7 6
♣ 10 8 6

The bidding:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1♠ Pass 1♥ Pass
2♠ Pass 2NT Pass
3♠ Pass

Opening lead: 5th of ♠

Had this deal occurred at rubber bridge, it would have been over in two minutes and forgotten as quickly. But it was dealt in a pair event, where overbids are vital.

North kept probing for a suit contract. Mark of South's strength, however, was in North's short suit.

One declarer made 11 tricks. Instead of winning the first heart with the king! That conveyed to West the impression that East had started with J 10 in the suit. On winning the king of diamonds, therefore, West was delighted at the opportunity to knock out declarer's remaining heart stopper, while still holding the ace of clubs.

A funny thing happened on the way to the forum. Declarer won the heart continuation with the jack and led another club. No matter how the defense reacted, declarer could collect one spade, three hearts and seven tricks in the minor suits for a second overtrick and top on the board.

TODAY AT	PHILADELPHIA '1' Demi Moore ... in G.I. JANE Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	PHILADELPHIA '2' Pierce Brosnan as James Bond... in 007...TOMORROW NEVER DIES Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	PLAZA The biggest cinema production TITANIC Shows: 3:00, 7:00 p.m.	CONCORD CONCORD '1' Adel Imam & Yusra ... in RISALA ILA AL WALI (ARABIC) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30 TITANIC SHOWS: 9:30 P.M. CONCORD '2' LONG KISS GOODNIGHT Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	GALLERIA 2 ABDOUN GRAND OPENING TITANIC Shows: 5:15, 8:45 The film is also on at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays	GALLERIA 1 ABDOUN GRAND OPENING TITANIC Shows: 5:15, 8:45 The film is also on at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays	Hisham Yanes Theatre TEL: 4625155 NOW ON DAILY THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE Starring Hisham Yanes and his group For reservations call: 4640155, 4625155
----------	---	--	---	---	--	--	---

مكتبة الامم المتحدة

RACJ starts season with 4X4 Rally

By Roufan Nahbas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Royal Automobile Club of Jordan (RACJ) kicks off the 1998 season with a 4X4 Desert Challenge Rally Tour on March 20.

The rally, the first of its kind in five years, will be run on desert tracks covering sandy terrain and natural obstacles.

The drivers will need to utilise their experience in manoeuvring and driving through hard desert routes spread with obstacles and sand dunes.

The 4X4 rally's result will be calculated according to overall time, and speed through special stages, that is why the need for a co-driver or more is essential.

This type of rally concentrates on the harmony developed between the driver and co-driver as calculations are

important to keep the rhythm of speed and time.

Registration for the 4X4 rally is open to all Jordanian participants.

As RACJ prepares for upcoming events, spokesman Bader Rasheed said that the club has several activities for the new season.

"We have added two new events for this season. The 4X4 Rally Tour and the Go-Carts Rally will be on the club's agenda," he told the Jordan Times.

"In addition to the usual events, there will be the National Rumman Hill Climb and speed tests," he said.

On the international level the RACJ has two events — the Jordan International Rally in May and the International Rumman Hill Climb in August.

Participation in all RACJ events requires a special licence issued from RACJ headquarters in addition to safety conditions of the car.

Princess Haya to compete in Zurich tournament

AMMAN (J.T.) — HRH Princess Haya will be among 40 competitors as Jordan's sole representative at the Zurich International Equestrian Tournament later this month.

The March 26-29 event will group top contestants from 12 countries. Jordan is the guest of honour and the Ministry of Tourism will be holding an exhibition on the sidelines in a bid to market the Kingdom internationally and promote interest in its archaeological sites.

The mounted haddia police and a folkloric troupe will also be taking part.

A delegation representing the Swiss media had visited the Kingdom on an invitation from Princess Haya last December and met with Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor.

King Hussein expressed his happiness at Jordan's participation and wished the event success. He also underlined Jordan's pride in Princess Haya's efforts to promote the sport and compete on the international level.

Princess Haya had taken part in the tournament for the past two years.

Evert Cup Kournikova battles to reach 3rd round

INDIAN WELLS (AFP)

Russian teenager Anna Kournikova gave her mother a birthday present Sunday, fighting back from a first-set deficit to beat Chanda Rubin in the second round of the Evert Cup.

The 16-year-old 16th seed, saved three match points in the 12th game of the third set, then dominated the tiebreaker to win 3-6, 6-2, 7-6 (7/2).

Kournikova, who has already made it to the round of 32 of the Australian Open, the semi-finals of a tournament in Hanover and the quarter-finals in Linz, Austria, said she had already benefitted from the increased number of tournaments she is allowed to play this year.

"I'm starting to understand how to win matches," said Kournikova, who can play 17 events this year under the WTA Tour's rules governing young players. "I'm playing a lot more matches, and winning a lot of matches."

In the third round Kournikova will face fifth-seeded Spaniard Conchita Martinez, who escaped with a 7-6 (7/0), 5-7, 6-3 victory over Venezuelan Maria Alejandra Vento.

The top seed in action Sunday was No. 4 Amanda Coetzer of South Africa, who downed unseeded

American Anne Miller 6-3, 6-3.

In the third round she'll face compatriot Joanne Kruger, who beat Austrian Barbara Schett 6-4, 6-3.

Ninth-seeded Sandrine Testud of France defeated compatriot Julie Halard-Decugis 6-3, 1-6, 6-4. In the third round she'll meet unseeded American Sandra Cacic, who upset seventh-seeded Frenchwoman Nathalie Tauziat on Saturday.

Tenth-seeded Belgian Dominique van Roost beat Austrian Barbara Paulus 6-4, 6-0 to advance to a meeting with eighth-seeded American Venus Williams.

Japanese 11th seed Ai Sugiyama beat unseeded American Tara Snyder 6-1, 4-6, 6-1 to line up a third-round match against third-seeded German Steffi Graf.

Kournikova, playing in her sixth tournament of 1998, was at her best when the odds were against her Sunday.

After double faulting twice to give Rubin match point in the 12th game of the third set, she saved it with a deep forehand that Rubin could barely get her racket on. She netted a forehand to give Rubin another match point, but Rubin netted her service return. On the third match

point Kournikova again played an aggressive rally that ended with Rubin hitting a backhand long.

"I wasn't thinking anything," Kournikova said of that game. "I was thinking I can't lose. It's my mom's birthday."

"It happened that I started to be aggressive on the match points. I should play all the time aggressive like I did on those points. It was some great shots."

Coetzer, playing her first tournament since losing in the semi-finals in Tokyo in January, encountered little resistance from qualifier Miller.

Testud, who has battled a right achilles tendon problem and a painful left knee, said she was relieved to escape with a victory over Halard-Decugis.

On Monday, the ATP Tour Champions Cup, running concurrently with the Evert Cup, swings into action, with Andre Agassi, winner of a tournament in Scottsdale on Sunday, scheduled to play Australian Todd Woodbridge.

SCOREBOARD

Final
Jan Strydom (NOR) 7-6 (7/2), 6-3
Doubles
Final
Jacco Eltingh (NED) 7-6 (7/2), 6-3
Norval (ZIM) 7-6 (7/2), 6-3

Evert Cup
2nd Rd
Amanda Coetzer (RSA) 6-3, 6-3
Conchita Martinez (ESP) 6-7 (0/7), 7-5
Sandrine Testud (FRA) 6-3, 1-6, 6-4
Dominique Van Roost (BEL) 6-4, 6-0
Ai Sugiyama (JPN) 6-1, 4-6, 6-1
Ruxandra Dragomir (ROM) 5-7, 6-0
6-0
Anna Kournikova (RUS) 3-6, 6-2, 7-6 (7/2)
Meike Hingis (SWE) 4-6, 6-1
Joanne Kruger (AUS) 6-4, 6-3

Scottsdale ATP
Final
Andre Agassi (USA) 6-4, 7-6 (7/2)
Todd Woodbridge (AUS) 6-4, 7-6 (7/2)

Italian Serie A
Barceloneta 1-0
Bari 1-0
Parma 1-0
Brescia 1-0
AC Milan 1-0
Udinese 1-0
Fiorentina 1-0
Napoli 1-0
Vicenza 1-0
Lazio 1-0

Portuguese Championship
Vitoria 1-0
Rio Ave 1-0
Sporting 1-0
Sporting 1-0
V. Gomes 1-0

English Premier League
Arsenal 1-0
Newcastle 1-0
Chelsea 1-0

Dutch Eredivisie
FC Groningen 1-0
FC Utrecht 1-0
FC Twente 1-0

Belgian First Division
VVB 1-0
Standard 1-0
Sporting 1-0

Spanish La Liga
Real Madrid 1-0
D. La Hoya 1-0
Sporting 1-0
Mallorca 1-0
R. Espanol 1-0

Greek Football Championship
PAOK 1-0
Panathinaikos 1-0
Olympiacos 1-0
Aris 1-0
Athinaikos 1-0

Swedish Allsvenskan
Malmö 1-0
Djurgårdens 1-0
Hälsjö 1-0
Almqvist 1-0
Björns 1-0

Bookmakers to take team bets after Australian race farce

LONDON (AFP) — British betting shops are to offer odds on teams as well as individual drivers in Formula One races after Sunday's controversial ending to the Australian Grand Prix.

Bookmakers William Hill said the decision by David Coulthard to pull over to let McLaren team-mate Mika Hakkinen win was "highly unsatisfactory" for punters who had bet on the British driver.

Spokesman Graham Sharpe ruled out making an official complaint about the drivers' actions, saying that was a matter for the sport's governing body, the FIA.

But he suggested teams could be ordered to declare any pre-race agreements between drivers so punters could make informed choices about who to put their money on — and warned the controversy was likely to hit the number of bets put on Formula One races.

Race officials reacted angrily after David Coulthard pulled over two laps from the end of yesterday's race in Melbourne to let team-mate Hakkinen win.

The pair said afterwards they had a pre-race "gentleman's agreement" that whoever led at the first corner could claim victory.

For the next race in the season, taking place in Brazil next month, William Hill will be offering team bets as well as on individual drivers for the first time.

Odds for yesterday's race, 13-8 for Hakkinen and 9-4 for Coulthard, even though the Scottish racer was the more popular choice for punters, reflecting the fact that Coulthard last year also pulled over to let Hakkinen through.

Drama in Serie A; Barcelona take 5-point lead

PARIS (AFP) — Juventus scraped a 1-1 draw with Udinese and title rivals Inter Milan lost 1-0 to Parma after Ronaldo missed a penalty in a dramatic afternoon for the top Serie A clubs on Sunday.

Juventus striker Filippo Inzaghi had a goal disallowed for off-side within seconds of the re-start, but it all looked to be going wrong for the reigning champions in the 76th minute.

Jonathan Bachini sent a ball into the middle and Oliver Bierhoff dived, allowing the ball to beat Juventus goalkeeper Angelo Peruzzi, although the German striker did not appear to make contact.

Argentinian striker Hernan Crespo meanwhile kept Parma's Champions League hopes alive with a 77th minute winner against Inter Milan. Inter, who have never won at their Tardini ground, had a goal by Argentine Diego

Someone disallowed in the 35th minute.

And their bad luck continued in the 67th, when Parma's Brazilian defender Ze Maria tripped compatriot Ronaldo and the Inter ace saw his penalty saved by 20-year-old goalkeeping phenomenon Gianluigi Buffon.

It was Ronaldo's first miss of the season while for Buffon, who made his Serie A debut aged 17, the save will have sealed his place in Cesare Maldini's World Cup squad.

It also was sweet revenge for the keeper after Ronaldo blasted a free-kick past him in the home leg, which Inter won 1-0.

Parma coach Carlo Ancelotti said: "We were playing against an excellent Inter side and it went well. We played good football throughout the second-half and the team responded well to the penalty."

Barcelona took a five points lead over Real

Madrid at the top of the Spanish first division Saturday after scoring a 3-0 home victory over their bitter rivals who were reduced to ten men for almost the entire second-half.

Celta Vigo took third spot on Sunday following a 1-0 win at bottom club Sporting Gijon, who have only won seven points in 28 matches.

Atletico Madrid dropped from third to fourth following a 0-0 draw at home to Real Betis, also on Sunday.

Lens kept their unexpected French title challenge very much on the rails Saturday night when they came away from champions Monaco with a 1-0 victory to move into second place.

Monaco slipped down to fourth place — three points clear of disappointing Paris St Germain who were held 1-1 at home by Toulouse.

Paris St Germain's run of disappointments continued when a 58th minute goal by Marco Simone was cancelled out two minutes later by Ivory Coast striker Joel Tieti who fired home after racing on to a through ball from Thierry Moreau.

The PSG players were jeered off the pitch and the result put under-fire Brazilian manager Ricardo under even more pressure.

Bayern Munich fell deep into crisis Sunday evening with a 1-0 defeat in Schalke which has divided the team and even placed their tenure in next season's Champions' League in jeopardy.

Bayern (47 points) were considered sure starters in Europe's top club competition, either as German champions or runners up, but are now seven points behind top placed Bayer Kaiserslautern (56 points) with third placed Bayer Leverkusen (45 points) breathing hot down their necks, just two points behind with nine matches to play.

Schalke opened strongly with Martin Max forcing a great save by Oliver Kahn in the early stages. Mike Bueskens was handy on the

wing and it was an aggressive cross from him in the 19th minute which set up a sliding Thomas Linke for Schalke's goal.



Croatian Lazio striker Alen Boksic (R) fights for the ball with Roma's defender Marco de Moraes Cafu of Brazil during their soccer game in Rome (Reuters photo)

Schalke opened strongly with Martin Max forcing a great save by Oliver Kahn in the early stages. Mike Bueskens was handy on the

Today .. The Grand Opening .. Today at

Plaza Galleria

Housing Bank Complex
Tel.: 5699238

www.cns.go.com.jo/galleria
Abdoun - Tel.: 5934793, 079/33430

TECKETS CAN BE PURCHASED AT THE CINEMA
NO RESERVATIONS BY TELEPHONE



Plaza shows: 3:00-7:00 p.m.
Galleria (1) shows: 5:00-8:30 p.m., Galleria (2) shows: 5:15-8:45 p.m.
Shows will be on at 2:0 p.m. Wednesday, Thursday and Friday every week



UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME PROGRAMME OF ASSISTANCE TO THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE JOB VACANCIES IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

UNDP/PAPP is implementing, jointly with the Ministry of Agriculture of the Palestinian Authority, and with funding from the Government of Japan and the Netherlands, a series of projects in the areas of Agricultural Policy and Planning and Agricultural Adaptive Research and Extension. New initiatives are also being designed in the area of Food Security Policies.

In the framework of these projects UNDP/PAPP, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture of the Palestinian Authority, is interested in candidates for Local Senior Experts and Technical Assistance positions, with Duty stations in Al-Beirah and Gaza, in the areas of:

1. Agricultural Policy Analysis and Planning;
2. Agricultural Adaptive Research and Extension;
3. Food Security Policies

Candidates should have degrees relevant to the positions, as well as relevant professional experience and exposure. Experience with in or with the Palestinian Authority and understanding of the present agricultural institutional set-up in the West Bank and Gaza Strip would be a strong asset.

Interested candidates are requested to send their applications before 19 March 1998.

Applications should be sent to:

UNDP/PAPP

Reference: Agricultural Sector Positions (Position 1,2, or 3)

4A, Ya'Kubi Street P.O. Box 51359 Jerusalem Fax: 02 6280089

Only short-listed candidates will receive an acknowledgment.

German leaders engage in rare criticism of Israeli policy

BONN (R) — German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel and Gerhard Schröder, the opposition Social Democratic Party's candidate for chancellor, were quoted on Monday as saying the Israeli government was to blame for the stalled Middle East peace process.

In language unusually blunt for German politicians, the two men told the magazine *Tribune* in separate interviews that criticism of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu did not mean Germany was taking an anti-Israeli position.

"Israel is making it very

difficult for its friends at the moment," Mr. Kinkel said in his interview, excerpts of which were released ahead of the magazine's March quarterly issue, which is focusing on the 50th anniversary of Israel's statehood.

Mr. Kinkel said many members of the German parliament were becoming frustrated with Mr. Netanyahu's policies.

"It is not a paradox when we say quite clearly we consider the Israel government's settlement policies to be a violation of international law," Mr. Kinkel said.

Negotiations to secure a

lasting peace following the 1993 Oslo accords have been deadlocked for a year amid Jewish settlement-building on Arab territory and what Israel says is Palestinian failure to prevent violence by Islamist groups.

German politicians rarely speak out against Israel. In part because of its guilt over the Holocaust, Germany is regularly among the most ardent supporters of Israel.

Mr. Schröder, premier of Lower Saxony who will challenge Chancellor Helmut Kohl for his party in a general election on Sept. 27, was quoted as saying Germany

should be able to criticise Israel's current government without that being considered anti-Semitic.

"Without wanting to interfere [in internal Israeli politics], we are much more critical about Netanyahu's role than we were with his predecessors," Mr. Schröder said. He added that a Social Democratic chancellor would be a firm supporter of Israel.

"Criticism of Israel on some issues should be possible, but not disguised as a modern variation of anti-Semitism," Mr. Schröder said.

Mubarak complains of Netanyahu's empty promises

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak complained in an interview published in an Israeli newspaper Monday that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had repeatedly failed to honour promises made to him concerning the peace process.

"I have met with him several times and until today all I got from him were promises. Nothing was carried out," Mr. Mubarak was quoted as telling the *Maariv* newspaper.

Mr. Mubarak specifically mentioned a meeting with Mr. Netanyahu in January 1996 in Davos, Switzerland, during which the Israeli premier vowed to quickly authorise the opening of an airport and seaport in the Gaza Strip and safe passage corridors through Israeli territory between the West Bank and Gaza.

All three projects are called for under the Oslo peace accords.

"Netanyahu said to me: Within two or three weeks

from the time I return to Israel these issues will be sorted out," Mr. Mubarak said.

"But January and February and March and an entire year went by and nothing happened," he said.

Mr. Mubarak said Mr. Netanyahu's headline stance in negotiations with the Palestinians was "without a doubt" harming Israel's relations with Egypt.

He said that under Israel's former Labour leaders, Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, "we made progress in the peace process."

"Businessmen from Egypt began working with Israelis, people calmed down... But ever since Netanyahu came to power, things have been turned upside down, businessmen are afraid of visiting you," he said.

Mr. Mubarak warned that a continuation of the year-old deadlock in the Palestinian peace process could lead to violence.

"In the long run it will be

dangerous both for the Palestinians and the Jewish settlers" living in occupied areas, he said.

"The Palestinians will try to harm the settlers, since they see them as people who stole their land," he said. "I am afraid that violence will be renewed."

Mr. Mubarak also chided Mr. Netanyahu's recent offer of a conditional withdrawal from the buffer zone Israel occupies in south Lebanon without trying to reach peace agreements with either the Lebanese government or its Syrian patron.

"My advice is don't play crafty games. If you want to solve the problem of south Lebanon, solve the Palestinian problem. Build trust. Then the Syrians will trust the process and move forward," he said.

"The Syrians see what is happening to the Palestinians and have no faith in you," he said. "Live in reality and not in a world of illusions."

Israeli hacker wanted for U.S. break-ins unbowed by FBI hunt

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A teenage Israeli computer whiz carried out a new raid on U.S. Defence Department computers over the weekend even as U.S. federal agents tried to track him down for earlier break-ins, the *Yedioth Ahronot* newspaper reported Monday.

The 18-year-old hacker, known only by his Internet signature "Analyst," used a hook-up to the Internet computer communications network located at a southern Israeli university to enter the Pentagon computer, the newspaper said.

The youth penetrated the Pentagon system despite the fact that he was already the target of a massive hunt launched by the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) after he carried out a series of raids into U.S. government and university computers last month, it said.

The newspaper quoted an Israeli computer expert, Mark Gazit, who said he was helping the FBI in its search for the hacker.

Mr. Gazit, a deputy general manager at the Israeli branch of the Internet provider NetVision, told the *Yedioth* that 47 FBI agents had been assigned to the case.

A deputy U.S. defence secretary, John Hamre, revealed last week that Pentagon computers containing non-classified information had been penetrated by someone using the Internet system.

He called the break-ins "the most highly organised and systematic attack the Pentagon has seen to date," but added that the perpetrator had caused no damage during his foray.

Mr. Gazit said U.S. police last week detained two California high school students who allegedly worked with the hacker to carry out the break-ins and had contacted NetVision to locate the Israeli.

Israeli police and foreign ministry spokesmen said they had not been contacted by U.S. authorities for help in the search.

Analyst, said to live with his parents in the Tel Aviv region, spoke of his exploits in an interview to the Israeli Internet site Walla (www.walla.co.il).

He said the California teens had been his "students" who he was training to replace him after he "retires from hacking" in the near future.



MUSLIM REFUGEE: A Bosnian woman hangs her laundry in Brod, a suburb of the Bosnian Serb-held town of Brcko, Monday. Before the war in Bosnia, surrounding areas of Brcko town were densely populated by Muslims (AFP photo)

Sudan's president brings opposition into cabinet

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudan's President Omar Al Bashir has made major cabinet changes by bringing in 12 new faces, including an ex-rebel leader from the south and two northern opponents, officials said Monday.

The reshuffle made by decree on Sunday night also saw retired army General Ibrahim Suleiman, a former military chief of staff, notably replace General Hassan Abdul Rahman Ali at the ministry of defence.

The changes in General Bashir's regime, backed by hard-line Islamists, came as it was up against rebels who have fought Khartoum since 1983 to end domination of the animist and Christian south by the Arabised north.

The mainstream rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) has joined ranks with

exiled members of the northern opposition, but has also seen some former guerrillas go over to the government side in constant jockeying for power.

One of the ex-rebel chiefs formerly close to SPLA head Colonel John Garang, Lam Akol, has been made minister of transport in the country, which has been hard-hit by ongoing conflict and is geographically the largest in Africa.

Major General Abdul Rahim Mohammed Hussein took the interior ministry from General Bakri Hassan Saleh. The latter was put in charge of presidential affairs under Gen. Bashir, who seized power in a 1989 coup, ousting the elected civilian government of Sadek Al Mahdi.

Ten ministers lost their jobs and two members of Mr. Mahdi's moderate Islamist

Umma Party, now officially banned like all the old political movements and the trade unions, were given the health and irrigation portfolios.

The ex-Umma members were retired General Mahdi Babu Nimer and Sherif Al Tuhami, whose water supply portfolio had remained vacant for almost a year following the appointment of his predecessor to govern Sennar State close to border with Ethiopia.

Gen. Nimer, who had been chief of staff during Mr. Mahdi's term as prime minister between 1986 and his ouster, replaced the only woman in the outgoing cabinet, Ihsane Ghabwachi.

However, Sudanese women still saw one of their number in government, as Agnes Lukodo, a former state governor, was named minister of employment.

Blair presses Netanyahu on redeployment of Israeli troops

LONDON (AFP) — British Prime Minister Tony Blair urged Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Sunday to make progress on the redeployment of Israeli troops from the West Bank, Mr. Blair's spokesman said.

"Mr. Blair stressed the urgent need for progress in the peace process and the particular importance of movement on the issue of redeployment of Israeli troops," the spokesman said after the meeting.

To press his case, Mr. Blair has scheduled a tour of the Middle East, including a stop in Israel, shortly after Easter, his spokesman added. The exact dates and countries of the tour were not disclosed.

During an hour and a half meeting that was described as "constructive and friendly," the two leaders discussed the Middle East process, Iraq and Iran.

Mr. Netanyahu is on the last leg of a four-day tour of key European capitals.

"On the Middle East process, Prime Minister Netanyahu welcomed a more active European role, complementing that of the U.S.," the spokesman added.

Britain, which currently

holds the rotating European Union (EU) presidency, announced Thursday an EU initiative to break the peace process deadlock, insisting that Israel must carry out "substantial, credible and urgent" troop withdrawals from the West Bank and halt all building of Jewish settlements in Palestinian areas.

According to Israeli press reports Sunday, Mr. Netanyahu has drawn up a four-part plan to counter the British initiative.

He did not make any mention of the plan after the meeting, but the Israeli press claimed that he would present the plan to Mr. Blair during their talks.

Mr. Netanyahu's "plan" begins with quick completion of negotiations with the Palestinians on the opening of a Palestinian airport and joint Israeli-Palestinian industrial zone in the Gaza Strip, reports said.

This would be followed by a single troop pullback agreed on at an EU-hosted summit, which would also include talks on economic cooperation, water sharing and refugees.

"Final status" talks would then be launched to thrash out

a permanent peace agreement covering such central issues as the borders and status of the Palestinian entity and the fate of Jerusalem.

After the meeting, Mr. Netanyahu reiterated Israel's proposal for a conditional withdrawal from south Lebanon, saying Israel was "prepared to withdraw at any time."

"The withdrawal from Lebanon depends solely on Lebanon's ability to carry out the obligations of the [U.N. Security Council] Resolution 425, namely to guarantee security," he told reporters.

"We are prepared to do our part," the Israeli premier said, adding: "It's up to the Lebanese authorities."

Israel has offered to implement a 20-year-old U.N. resolution, calling for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon, if Beirut pledges to ensure the security of the border area and prevent guerrilla attacks on northern Israel.

Earlier Sunday in Oslo, Mr. Netanyahu said he was committed to peace and called for a summit meeting with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, possibly in Oslo.

Iran MPs demand probe into allegation of torture

TEHRAN (AFP) — More than 150 deputies in the Iranian parliament have called for an investigation into allegations that police tortured Tehran city officials during their detention, a newspaper reported Monday.

Arzeshha (Values) weekly said 152 MPs of the 270-member parliament had sent a letter to supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei demanding the probe to be launched at the highest level.

Kurosh, Fuladi, a deputy from western Iran, told the paper that the request followed a recent meeting between the MPs and the victims, who are former senior officials from

Tehran municipality.

"During the meeting some of the [district] mayors made statements more painful than previous allegations," he said. "So they asked the leader to establish the facts in a bid to confront the judiciary if they are true."

The unprecedented accusations of torture have taken on a political dimension and sullied the reputations of two pillars of the Islamic republic, the police and the courts.

The city officials, including several district chiefs, were arrested several months ago as part of an investigation into financial corruption touching

the municipality, led by moderate Mayor Gholam-Hussein Karbaschi.

As soon as they were released they complained about their treatment to a coalition of moderates and leftists in parliament.

Newspapers said that their testimony shook the deputies that some even cried.

Iran's Chief Justice Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi has denied the charges, saying they were part of a political campaign against the police and courts.

The ayatollah himself has been under growing attack from the moderate and left-wing press for his "authoritarian ways."

Iraq keeps ghost airport primed for resumption of normal flights

By Steve Kirby
Agency France Presse

BAGHDAD — The flight indicator in the arrivals hall at the capital's Saddam International Airport, once Iraq's bustling world travel hub, has just one word on it: Arriman.

But since the 1991 Gulf war, a 950-kilometre road journey from the Jordanian capital has been virtually the only way into Iraq, even for some of the world's top diplomats.

U.N. sanctions banning all flights into or out of Iraq without specific prior approval have reduced Saddam International to a ghost airport, apart from a spate of aid flights since December.

In the departures hall, the indicator board still invites passengers to check in for Iraqi Airways' Flight 016 to Frankfurt.

"It's been showing that flight for more than seven years," a civil aviation department official said.

Late on Jan. 16, 1991, just hours before U.S.-led air raids launched the Gulf war, a scheduled flight left for Russia and Iraqi Airways flew other planes out to safety in Iran, Jordan and Tunisia.

They were to be the last aircraft to fly in or out of Saddam International for the best part of seven years.

The French-built airport completed in 1982, just three years after Saddam Hussein rose to

the Iraqi presidency, became a ghost airport. Its three modern terminals still staffed but without any passengers to serve.

Route maps still proudly proclaim all the world destinations once served by Iraqi Airways.

"Two million passengers a year passed through each of the three terminals before 1991," said Imad Hameed, the airport's director for four flightless years.

"But now we don't even have any planes," said Mr. Hameed, a former pilot for Iraqi Airways. "All pilots need to fly to refresh their knowledge. I don't know how to explain how it is for a pilot."

The airport is still served by a three-lane highway from the city centre, but now it carries just a handful of vehicles a day.

Roadside adverts from before the war still extol the products of Iraqi firms, many of them virtually put out of business by the war over Kuwait and U.N. sanctions.

"It's more than a hotel," says one advert for the Rasheed, the Baghdad hotel now better known as a base for foreign journalists during Iraq's recurrent crises with the international community.

Every day the airport staff clock in for work. Mr. Hameed said he did not know exactly how many people the airport now employed, but more than 50 were waiting for the Iraqi Airways shuttle bus at the afternoon change of shift.

He insisted his staff were kept busy. Because of U.N. sanc-

tions outlawing all but limited imports of food and medicines, it is a daily battle to keep the airport maintained, he said.

"Because of the embargo, we just can't get the spare parts, so we have had to take them from the other terminals," he said.

By hook and by crook the staff keep the airport's main Babylon terminal going, right down to its escalators and a two-storey illuminated fountain.

The airport tannoy system works too, but instead of flight announcements it plays popular music from Iraqi Radio.

The X-ray machines have been kept in place to check the baggage of departing passengers, but now they bear "Down USA" stickers and, with no

flights to protect, the visitor can pass through quicker than VIPs.

"In the old days we used to get two uniforms a year, but now, because of the sanctions, we have to wear our own clothes," said an airport employee who asked not be named.

"It's been said for all of us working in an airport without any passengers."

Last Christmas, on Dec. 25, the staff finally received some solace when a Russian aircraft received permission from the U.N. Sanctions Committee to land at Saddam International — the first such exemption since the war.

The plane, which the sanctions initially forced to divert to Iran, was carrying naverick

ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and a delegation of Russian MPs.

Since that first flight, the Sanctions Committee has allowed about a dozen diplomatic and aid flights to land at Saddam International.

U.N. chief Kofi Annan used the airport on his peace mission last month. "A French civil aviation expert came to check our safety systems first — he gave us a clean bill of health," Mr. Hameed said proudly.

Some diplomats here have said their countries are pressing for the Security Council to lift the restrictions on normal flights, as a first token easing of sanctions to reward Iraq for its cooperation with U.N. weapons inspectors.



German novice nun seeks companion

COLOGNE (AFP) — A novice nun sparked an unholy row after advertising... for a husband. According to the weekly news magazine *Focus*, the 34-year-old woman asked a matrimonial agency to find her "a Catholic gentleman with the same opinions," with a view to "friendship on a Christian basis." Her request duly appeared in the marriage section in the personal columns of Cologne's diocesan newspaper. "The advertisement should never have been published," a diocesan spokesman stormed. "It's like a fiancée placing a marriage ad."

Norwegian fakir sledges on a bed of nails

KVITFJELL (R) — A self-styled Norwegian fakir added a bizarre sideshow to a world cup downhill race by sledging down a mountain-side on a bed of nails mounted on skis. Naked above the waist apart from a turban on his head, Inge Vidar Svingen sledged about 100 metres down a piste at Kvitfjell lying on his back on a bed of 270 six-inch nails. "It was cold but I concentrated so much that it didn't hurt," he told Reuters after his run. He said he got slightly scratched getting onto his sledge but did not get hurt going over bumps.

Oasis apologise for bad singing

BRISBANE (R) — British pop band Oasis wound up an Australian tour, plagued by reports of loutish behaviour, with an apology for bad singing. Their farewell concert in the northern city of Brisbane, which attracted only a few thousand fans, was marred by on-stage bickering among the band before it was cut short. "We're sorry about the singing," songwriter Noel Gallagher told the Seven television network. Some fans left before the concert finished. "It was actually quite boring," one fan told Seven.

Italy to lay down rules for 'genuine pizza'

ROME (R) — Tired of pineapple toppings, black pudding options and other half-baked alternatives, the birthplace of pizza is putting its foot down. Egged on by perfectionists in Naples, Italy's national standards body (UNI) is laying down strict rules for the "genuine pizza" as it is prepared in the southern port city. UNI says it hopes to introduce a quality mark in Italy by October, when an international pizza-fest will be held in Naples. Then it will ask the European Commission to extend a law that says only products from a certain region can lay claim to the name Neapolitan pizza.

Buddhist faithful warned about immoral monks

HONG KONG (R) — Hong Kong's Buddhist clergy has warned that phoney monks who have wives and smoke cigarettes are preying on the faithful at funerals. "Don't trust people who hang around the death-bed and offer services," said Hin-Hung, a senior monk at the Hong Kong Buddhist Association. "There are impostors and it's something that's been going on for a long time." Buddhist monks are used by many Chinese here for funeral rites and are paid with donations. Hin-Hung said the person performing the rites should not be "someone who smokes, goes back home to his wife and does things which aren't very moral."